Changing Spatial Discourses of National Identity in Jordan

Laura Wing Mei Yan

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Prerequisite for Honors in History

April 2014

© 2014 Laura W. M. Yan
# Contents

Acknowledgements 2

Introduction 5

Chapter I: Establishing the State of Transjordan, 1850 to 1940 13

Chapter II: Discourses of Pan-Jordanianism: The Annexation of the West Bank, 1948-1967 55

Chapter III: Discourses of a Tribalized National identity, 1967 to 1990 95

Chapter IV: Museums, Monuments, and Downtown Amman: Spatial Discourses of National Identity 132

Conclusion 176

Bibliography 181
Acknowledgements

The idea for this project emerged from readings of articles by Dr. Elena Corbett, who graciously read my initial proposal and suggested several invaluable sources. I must also thank the staff at the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan for their help and their wonderful tea. Preston Quinn, one of my golden friends from my study abroad program in Jordan, also allowed me to use some of his striking photographs of the Martyrs’ Memorial. The staff at the British Library and the National Archives at Kew Garden were extremely helpful in guiding my first experience conducting archival research.

I could not have completed this project without the resources of the Wellesley College Library. The Wellesley College History Department has also been my home base for the past year and through the department’s Schwarz scholarship, I was able to travel to London. I would like to thank Professor Brenna Greer and the other honors students for their generous feedback and support. I am also immensely grateful to Professors Simon Grote, Louise Marlow, and Y. Tak Matsusaka for giving their time to serve on my honors committee. For their unconditional love and support, I must thank my family, friends, and loved ones.

Finally, I cannot thank my advisor Professor Lidwien Kapteijns enough. Your class about discourse is the foundation of this thesis. I am so grateful to you for being both my toughest critic and most enthusiastic cheerleader. You truly helped me fall in love with history and I would not be the student I am today without your guidance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>British Colonial Office Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>British Foreign Office Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOR</td>
<td>British India Office Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JNM</td>
<td>Jordanian National Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAM</td>
<td>Palestine Archeological Museum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The idea for a project about changing spatial discourses of national identity in Jordan emerged during my study abroad experience in Jordan. One of the main themes of a course titled ‘Jordan: A Case Study in Diplomacy and Development’ was narratives and counter-narratives of Jordanian history. As part of the course, I visited various spaces such as the Martyrs’ Memorial and some museums, participated in dialogues with government officials about the potential political and economic trajectories of Jordan, and read some secondary sources about Jordanian history. As I learned more about the narratives and counter-narratives of Jordanian history, I realized that another way to frame historical narratives was with the term ‘discourse’, which, in Foucauldian terms, is not just reflective but also prescriptive, articulating what reality should be according to one – perhaps hegemonic – point of view. From 1921 to the present, the Hashemite monarchy has engaged in and created discourses of Jordanian national identity that reflect how the Hashemite monarchy envisioned and symbolized Jordanian national identity. Charting discourses of Jordanian national identity showed that the Hashemite monarchy’s discourses privileged certain groups of Jordanians at different moments and according to different political contexts. At certain moments, the communities that were excluded or felt marginalized by official discourses of national identity articulated their own discourses of national identity, which were often premised on the exclusion of other communities. For example, as analyzed in the third chapter, certain communities that identified as tribes portrayed Palestinians as foreign or even erased their own Palestinian roots from their oral and written histories. This was done so that such tribes could engage
in a discourse of autochthony and think of themselves as ‘true Jordanians’. The relationship between official and community discourses was symbiotic and mutually constitutive. Communities’ claims of belonging to Jordan were both a reaction to Hashemite discourses of national identity and sources of new discourses of national identity that the monarchy could appropriate for its own purposes.

My initial interest in the project was in the relationship between discourses of Jordanian national identity and public spaces in Amman. Dr. Elena Corbett co-taught the course called ‘Jordan: A Case Study in Diplomacy and Development’ of my study abroad program. Her article about the construction of a Hashemite-dominated narrative of Jordanian history expressed in the King Hussein Park in the capital city of Amman sparked my interest in expressions of discourses of Jordanian national identity in public spaces in Amman. During my time in Jordan, I visited a number of public spaces in Amman, including the Martyrs’ Memorial, the King Hussein Park, the Jordan Museum, and downtown Amman, which are all spaces analyzed in the fourth chapter. Corbett’s article is an essential secondary source that illuminates concepts and contexts for the fourth chapter and I also used personal photographs of the spaces to illustrate my argument. But in order for the reader to fully understand the narratives expressed in public spaces and their significance, I needed to first show how the Jordanian government’s discourses of national identity changed over time and the specific contexts in which they emerged. Thus, this thesis includes three chapters devoted to the political history of Jordan from 1921 to the present with an emphasis on discourses of national identity and sources of legitimacy for the Hashemite monarchy. The fourth and final

---

1 Autochthony is a term that is used throughout the thesis to convey the notion of being indigenous or native.
chapter about public spaces in Amman illustrates how the Hashemite monarchy drew
upon all the previously discussed sources of legitimacy to produce narratives of Jordanian
history and discourses of Jordanian national identity that supported and still support
Hashemite rule.

This thesis is located at the intersection of the fields of political and urban history
and contributes to discussions about discourse, national identity, and modernity. Much of
the political history of Jordan presented in this thesis is based on well-known secondary
sources in the field of Jordanian history, including *Frontiers of the State in the Late
Ottoman Empire* by Eugene Rogan, *King Abdullah, Britain and the making of Jordan* by
Mary Wilson, *The Making of Jordan* by Yoav Alon, *Jordan, an invented nation?* by
Schirin Fathi, and *East Bank/West Bank* by Arthur Day. These sources provide essential
information about political contexts ranging from the late Ottoman period to the 1990s. I
have also drawn upon British Colonial Office and Foreign Office reports at the British
Library and the British National Archives. These primary sources provide insight into the
relationship between the British government and King Abdullah and various political
conflicts during the mandate period, especially during the early mandate period in the
1920s. The records also show how the British government framed the relationship
between Abdullah and his subjects. The secondary sources that were especially helpful in
understanding moments of political resistance and communities’ articulation of other
discourses of national identity were *Colonial Effects* by Joseph Massad and *Nationalist
Voices in Jordan* by Betty Anderson. These works analyze changing relations between
the monarchy, political opposition groups, Palestinian communities, and East Bank
political elites, focusing on the period from the establishment of the mandate in 1921 to
Black September in 1970. Massad’s work is especially significant for its analysis of the exclusion of Palestinians in Hashemite constructions of Jordanian national identity.

In order to show how different discourses of national identity were expressed, I used both primary and secondary sources. Memoirs including the volume published by King Abdullah and *The Story of the Arab Legion* by John Glubb were valuable sources for the discussion of colonial and Hashemite discourses of national identity during the early mandate period. These memoirs highlighted both Abdullah’s and Glubb’s emphasis on loyalty to the Hashemites as an essential component of their idea of patriotism. In his study titled *Nationalism and Genealogical Imagination*, Andrew Shryock recorded oral histories from various communities identified as ‘tribes’ and also examined the phenomenon of written tribal histories. The oral histories were essential to analyzing tribal discourses of Jordanian national identity in the third chapter. Linda Layne’s *Home and Homeland* was an important source for charting the Hashemite monarchy’s move from a discourse of a pan-Jordanian national identity, which aimed to include both Palestinians and Jordanians, to a discourse of a tribalized national identity, which privileges members of tribes as autochthonous and thus bearers of true Jordanianness.

As for urban history, this thesis does not delve into the urban planning of Amman or the public spaces examined here and it does not feature an in-depth study of the history of Amman as a city. However, the thesis does contribute to discussions of the role of cities in constructing a national culture and discourses of national identity. In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre wrote that space is not just a locus of social interactions but shapes social relations. This idea was essential to understanding the potential of spaces in influencing behavior and, by extension, feelings of belonging and
the imagining of identities. Omar Amireh’s conceptualization of a place as a space with meanings and cues that encourage certain behaviors was also instrumental to writing about the relationship between spaces and users and I used his ideas to frame my discussion of places in the fourth chapter. Aside from Amireh, important writers in the field of Jordanian urban history include Rami Daher, Irene Maffi, Seteney Shami, and Elena Corbett, all of whose works helped shape the fourth chapter. Although she does not focus on Amman, Kimberly Katz’s *Jordanian Jerusalem* was an important work of Jordanian urban history in that she illustrates how the Hashemite monarchy used claims to ownership of the holy sites in Jerusalem as sources of legitimacy during Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank.

In addition to Lefebvre, various works were essential to understanding concepts of discourses and national identity. The term discourse is used extensively throughout this thesis and it is premised on Michel Foucault’s concept of discourse. Discourse can mean statements in general but in Foucauldian terms – and for the purpose of this study – discourse is associated with power relations. Discourse can be described as a “system which describes the way we perceive reality.”[^2] This is possible due to the rules that govern which discourses circulate.


[^3]: Mills, 54.
These practices or rules that regulate discourse are sometimes associated with institutions in power. By establishing rules of discourses, these institutions impose and circulate their visions of social reality by emphasizing some voices and silencing others.⁴

In his introduction to the anthology *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha argues that the self/other binary that is usually used as a concept in discussions about national identity should be complicated. There is a process of incorporation of new members into a body politic and the ‘other’ actually emerges in intimate contexts controlled by the ‘self’. Bhabha also conceptualizes narratives of national history as claims to cultural supremacy and as performative spaces. Constructing a discourse of national identity requires constant performances in order to maintain the narrative or discursive position of power. This thesis examines how the Hashemite monarchy has performed and expressed discourses of national identity over time.

The first chapter of the thesis focuses on the creation of the state of Jordan. The chapter begins in the late Ottoman period in order to demonstrate the establishment of institutions that were used by the British during the mandate period and to highlight the emergence of new political elites. This section is followed by an analysis of how the Hashemites gained more control of Transjordan. The Anglo-Hashemite government’s control of state resources meant that it could establish a patronage system by which different groups claimed loyalty to Abdullah in exchange for access to resources. This patronage system catalyzed the politicization of tribal identities, which is an important component of the third chapter. The discourses of national identity that emerged during the mandate period were largely based on Abdullah’s vision of Arab nationalism. Neither Abdullah nor the British government emphasized a Jordanian national identity based on

⁴ Mills, 61-65.
autochthony. Rather, they emphasized loyalty to the Anglo-Hashemite government and inclusion in the Arab nation. In order to justify this claim, Abdullah referred to the Hashemites’ role as leaders in the Arab Revolt and Britain’s aid towards the Arab Revolt as a sign of British government’s intention to help the Hashemites realize the Arab nation. Although mass anti-colonial nationalist movements did not develop during this period, political opposition groups emerged that framed their political claims in terms of Transjordanian autochthony, as opposed to Arab nationalism. Thus, competing discourses of national identity did emerge during the mandate period.

In the second chapter, focused on the period of Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank from 1948 to 1967, I analyze the political incorporation of the Palestinian population into the Jordanian state and the various discourses of national identity expressed in Jerusalem. By making visual and spatial claims over Jerusalem, King Hussein used his status as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad to justify his ‘protection’ of Jerusalem. In turn, by making claims to Jerusalem, the Hashemite monarchy bolstered its credentials as Arab nationalist leaders in the context of competing discourses of Arab nationalism, especially Gamal Abdul Nasser’s radical, anti-imperial socialism as opposed to King Hussein’s pro-Western version of Arab nationalism. At the same time, a strong political opposition movement undermined the Hashemite monarchy’s legitimacy by adopting Nasserism to frame their opposition.

The third chapter focuses on the aftermath of the 1967 War, especially the 1970 civil war also known as Black September, and its effects on discourses of national identity. In the 1970s, an ‘East Bank’ first discourse emerged that privileged ‘Transjordanians’ (supposedly indigenous Jordanians) over Palestinians. This discourse
was expressed in terms of tribalism, putting forward the idea that members of tribes were autochthonous. The government’s discourse of national identity as a tribal one was accompanied by the emergence of a tribal discourse of autochthony from political communities that identified as tribes. Individuals who claimed to represent these groups asserted autochthony exclusively for members of tribes by excluding Palestinians from their definition of national identity and making tribes bearers of national identity and culture.

The fourth chapter examines the spaces of the Jordan Museum, the Martyrs’ Memorial, the King Hussein Park, and downtown Amman. These spaces were designed by the Jordanian government and my analysis focuses on how they have mediated the Hashemite monarchy’s claims to legitimacy and discourses of national identity. By referring to glorious historical episodes from ancient civilizations such as the Nabataeans to the Arab Revolt in the more recent past, in these spaces, the Hashemite monarchy has presented itself as the rightful descendent of the past great rulers of Jordan. More recently, the monarchy has also adopted a vision of Jordan’s future that is based on aspects of neoliberal policies, which are highly contested within Jordan. By shaping dominant discourses of the past, present, and future of Jordan and the Hashemite monarchy as one and the same, the Hashemite monarchy continues to frame its legitimacy in terms of tradition and modernity. What the Hashemite monarchy considers traditional and modern have changed over time but the monarchy’s aspiration to narrate itself into significance by balancing both can be traced from its establishment in Jordan to the present.
Establishing the State of Transjordan, 1850 to 1940

Introduction

Transjordan was, to use Benedict Anderson’s words, an imagined state. However, Transjordan’s boundaries were not imagined by its inhabitants but rather, by Great Britain, which divided up the Arab provinces of the disintegrated Ottoman Empire with its ally France. Mary Wilson argues that the state of Transjordan was an artificial creation that merely served British interests.¹ In some respects, this is true: Jordan was a nation-state built by the Anglo-Hashemite government that emerged out of World War I. The British authorities drew the borders, created the institutions, and even designed the flag of the Arab Revolt that was later adopted as the Transjordanian flag.² According to Wilson, “Transjordan’s existence hinged on European interests rather than on a local or regional rationale.”³ Transjordan as a state was not preceded by a Transjordanian nation, in which a people was united by their common identity as Transjordanians and demanded a territorial state. Instead, the state was created by foreigners, a group that includes both the British and Hashemites, and they shaped a nation to legitimize the state.

Perhaps the dominant role of the British in Transjordan’s creation explains the absence of the actual residents of Transjordan in many narratives of the founding of Transjordan. Recent scholars have criticized the overemphasis on the Hashemite monarchy and the British in Jordan’s history. The field of Jordanian history is saturated with

¹ Mary Wilson, King Abdullah, Britain and the making of Jordan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 213.
² Sir Mark Sykes designed the Arab Army’s flag, which was flown when Faisal and T.E. Lawrence entered Damascus, and this flag later became the basis for Jordan’s national flag (Massad, 159). The flag is composed of horizontal black, white, and green stripes, and a white seven-pointed star in the middle of a red chevron. The meaning of the flag is explained on King Hussein’s official website: “The flag symbolizes the Kingdom’s roots in the Great Arab Revolt of 1916, as it is adapted from the revolt banner. The black, white and green bands represent the Arab Abbasid, Umayyad and Fatimid dynasties respectively, while the crimson triangle joining the bands represents the Hashemite dynasty. The seven-pointed Islamic star set in the center of the crimson triangle represents the unity of Arab peoples in Jordan” (“National Anthem,” King Hussein, web, 29 Nov. 2009).
³ Wilson, 58.
biographies of the Hashemite monarchs. However, works that focus on Jordanian citizens are lacking. Anderson argues that most recent scholarship about Jordan has failed to question Abdullah’s and his descendants’ centrality to Jordanian history and does not include Jordanians in their histories. By writing from the ‘high politics’ perspective and focusing almost exclusively on how the Hashemites consolidated their rule, many popular works of Jordanian history seem to equate the history of Hashemite rule in Jordan with the history of Jordan. The Hashemite monarchy has dominated histories of Jordan produced in Jordan and the monarchy’s control of discourses of national identity has undoubtedly influenced histories of Jordan written in the Western world.

Scholars such as Anderson, Massad, Alon, Shryock, and Layne have aimed to re-examine this version of Jordanian history. Anderson argues that one way the Hashemite government itself propagates Hashemite-Jordanian history through its publication of history textbooks. According to Anderson, the overarching theme of the textbooks is as follows: “The Hashemites are Jordan; Jordan is the Hashemite family…The citizens of the country have no faces and no names. The British creators of the state are merely a force to be fought by the Hashemite kings.” She attempts to make Jordanian citizens visible and present in their own history by detailing the narrative of the Jordanian Nationalist Movement (JNM), a coalition of political opposition groups that were active during the 1950s. Massad studied the role of British institutions in the production of a national culture, which is drawn from colonial ideas of tribalism. This culture is later adopted by Jordanian nationalists and painted

---


6 Anderson, 1.
as ‘traditional’. He also explores how, after the annexation of the West Bank, a national Jordanian identity developed in opposition to the Palestinian ‘other’, which I will elaborate on in the second chapter. Alon, Shryock, and Layne focus on the political roles of tribes and the relationship between tribal identities and national identity that has become extremely visible in Jordan since the beginning of the 1990s, and on which I will discuss in the third and fourth chapters.

If Transjordan was an artificial creation, how did a national identity, a sense of affinity of the notion of ‘being Jordanian’ develop? To answer this question, I will first examine the establishment of the state itself and then how it became a polity with a national identity. The first chapter will focus on the institutions that solidified Transjordan’s borders both in physical space and in people’s imaginations, and tethered the residents of Transjordan to its territory. Events under study will include the establishment of Transjordan’s borders and nationality laws. I will examine how the different groups in Transjordan related to Anglo-Hashemite rule, whether by participating in state institutions, opposing the state, or both at different times. A particularly important group is tribes, both nomadic and sedentary. By participating in the state’s patronage system, tribal identities became politicized, meaning that tribal identities were no longer just expressions of familial or social relations but were also expressions of differential power relations and used to access benefits from the state. Although by 1946, Transjordan had been firmly established as a state,

---

8 Massad, 222.
9 A ‘tribe’ is a term that deserves further explanation. Alon describes a tribe as a “group of people distinguished from other groups by notions of shared descent, real or imagined” (8). According to Wilson, whether or not people’s shared descent was real, tribes formed a “complex web of integrative social alliances” (57) and Wilson states that nearly everyone in Transjordan identified with a family, clan, and tribal affiliation (57). Therefore, the connections and relationships between members of a tribe were a significant social reality. During the mandate period, tribes became politicized: members of tribes could use their tribal affiliations to gain benefits from the state and state authorities also constructed categories of ‘tribes’ by assuming unified groups and fixed territorial boundaries (Eickelman, 128-129). Tribal identities and the meanings associated with them certainly inform the present as being part of a tribal network can lead to economic and political benefits. Furthermore, tribal and national identities interact to create a national identity that is framed and legitimized by tribal identities in Jordan today. This will be explored further in the third chapter.
a Transjordanian identity was still in formation. I will examine colonial, Hashemite, and political opposition discourses of national identity in order to answer the question: How did these discourses reflect and shape conceptualizations of a national Jordanian identity? During the mandate period, competing discourses of national identity emerged and these discourses shifted with changing political dynamics.

By focusing not only on the role of the British in creating the foundational institutions of Transjordan but also on Abdullah’s work in building relations between the government and different segments of the population, I hope to reconcile the multiple viewpoints of Jordanian history in the field. The relationship between Abdullah and his subjects was a patronage system by which different groups cooperated with the government when the benefits of doing so were apparent. The people in Transjordan were not passive recipients of Anglo-Hashemite rule. Before Abdullah arrived in Transjordan in 1921, the people in Transjordan had already experienced local rule through tribal sheikhs, as well as approximately seventy years of direct Ottoman rule (to different degrees depending on the region). The Ottomans had introduced some members of the population to benefits associated with state institutions. In fact, these Ottoman institutions even became helpful to their wartime enemies, as the Faisali and later the British governments retained Ottoman institutions until around 1930. Furthermore, new political elites emerged during the Ottoman period and they formed the first political opposition movement during the mandate period. Over time, different people’s interests changed and were expressed with various discourses. My aim is to see how these interests were expressed using discourses of national identity and how these discourses were expressed in public spaces in Amman. These public spaces are the sites of interaction between the state and its citizens and between citizens themselves.

---

10 Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 254.
Ottoman Rule

Before its defeat at Allied hands in 1918, the Ottoman Empire administered the territories of modern-day Jordan, Syria, and Palestine mostly from the Syrian city of Damascus. One of the main Ottoman interests in the area of Transjordan was the pilgrimage from Damascus to Mecca, which was the ‘centerpiece’ of Ottoman rule in Damascus because it was a valuable source of income.\(^{11}\) According to Norman Lewis, during the eighteenth century, the annual pilgrimage was also the main source of income for groups such as the Bani Sakhr,\(^{12}\) which provided camels and safe passage to the caravans in return for payment from the Ottoman authorities.\(^{13}\) Apart from ensuring the safe passage of pilgrims, the Ottoman government had very little presence in Transjordan before 1850 and mostly ruled through local sheikhs.\(^{14}\)

Ottoman rule in the area became more direct in 1864, when the Empire implemented the Vilayet Law. This law established a hierarchy of provinces, regions, and sub-provinces and in 1866, the Damascus governor Rashid Pasha created administrative districts in ‘Ajlun and Salt.\(^{15}\) The administration’s main aim in establishing direct rule in ‘Ajlun was to obtain agricultural produce and collect taxes in order to increase revenue after a series of financial crises. These goals undercut Bedouin raiders’ claims to taxes.\(^{16}\) Furthermore, the Ottoman security forces were able to provide services of protection that limited Bedouin groups’ ability to charge \textit{khuwa} protection fees. After a joint raid by the Bani Sakhr and ‘Adwan to

\(^{12}\) The Bani Sakhr is one of the largest and wealthiest confederacies of tribes and it dominated mostly the central region of Jordan (Alon, 22). According to Alon, Madaba was the traditional border between the Bani Sakhr and ‘Adwan (17). These two confederacies were rivals in the Balqa’ region; the nomadic, camel-herding controlled mostly the eastern part of the region, where their wealthier sheikhs owned cultivated land, and the semi-settled ‘Adwan controlled the western part of the region on the banks of the Jordan River (Alon, 29).
\(^{14}\) I will use the term Transjordan to describe the geographical territory that will eventually become the nation-state of Transjordan. But this term does not denote a nation-state when used for the Ottoman period.
\(^{15}\) Rogan, 48.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., 44-45.
reassert their claims to *khuwa*, the Ottoman government set out to conciliate Fandi Al-Fayiz, whom the Ottomans acknowledged as the leader of the Bani Sakhr tribe. The Al-Fayiz family recognized the benefits of working with the Ottomans and Fandi Al-Fayiz’s sons continued fostering good relations with the Ottoman government; they were rewarded with more land in Balqa’ and modest administrative appointments. The land registration program led the Bani Sakhr to register much of their land during the 1890s but such property came to be concentrated in the hands of a few powerful families, such as the Al-Fayiz family, within the Bani Sakhr confederation. Meanwhile, poorer tribes continued to rent tribal, rather than individual, properties. These strong socioeconomic divisions did not just emerge between large groups of tribes but also occurred within large tribal confederacies such as the Bani Sakhr.

In the northern regions of ‘Ajlun and Balqa’, direct Ottoman rule undermined tribal sheikhs’ authority. Furthermore, some Bedouins became more reliant on Ottoman institutions such as the Ottoman court system, rather than tribal arbitration. In Salt, the Ottoman institutions were acknowledged as the ultimate authority. Until the 1860s, the townspeople in Salt paid a large annual tribute to the semi-nomadic ‘Adwan tribe for protection. But Ottoman rule became strong in Salt, to the extent that by the 1870s, Ottoman officials in Salt were able to raise taxes from the ‘Adwan and surrounding pastoralists. By

---

17 Lewis, 125; Khuwa is a form of compensation, usually in wheat, barley and clothing, made by settled villages to Bedouin groups in order for the Bedouins in exchange for protection (Rogan, 26).
18 Lewis, 126.
19 One of the major reform decrees of the Tanzimat, the Ottoman land code of 1858 required all landowners to register their land with the government and allowed individuals to purchase and register unoccupied state lands. Cleveland notes that this law created vast private estates in parts of Greater Syria, while peasant cultivators were suspicious of land registration and registered their land using the names of their patrons, which led to local notables’ accumulation of land (91-92). This phenomenon also occurs in the territory of Transjordan, which will be discussed below.
20 Rogan, 87-88.
21 Ibid., 180.
22 Ibid., 181.
23 Wilson, 54.
the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had established control in the north and gained the cooperation of the Bani Sakhr.

Ottoman rule in Transjordan was further consolidated by settlement of foreign groups. Circassian and Chechen groups arrived in Ottoman territory after conflicts with the Russian government and the majority of these refugees were directed to settle in Transjordan.24 According to Rogan, the Ottoman authorities decided to settle these refugees in the area between Salt and Karak in order to reinforce Ottoman the presence in this area.25 Many Circassian refugees became official intermediaries between the Ottoman administration and the local residents and assisted with tax collection in these rural, settled areas.26 The first permanent Circassian settlement was in the village of Amman, which would eventually grow to become Transjordan’s capital and will be discussed later in the chapter.

As indigenous tribes began accumulating vast amounts of land and refugees settled on Transjordanian territory, the urban merchant class also emerged as powerful landholders during this period. Once Ottoman rule had been firmly established in the late nineteenth century, merchants from Syria and Palestine, attracted to the security and low prices of grain in Transjordan, began settling in Salt.27 By the 1890s, the new merchants in Salt exported more than half of Transjordan’s agricultural products, which included wheat, barley, raisins, and grapes, to Syria, Palestine, and even Europe.28 These merchants started accumulating land through foreclosures on bad loans and they became the largest landholders in Salt.29 At the same time, intermarriage between Syrian or Palestinian men and local women was increasing.30 Marriage was a way of tethering the new merchants to the territory that would become Transjordan and increasing their sense of belonging to the territory. The merchants’

---

24 Lewis, 96-99.
25 Rogan, 72.
26 Ibid., 75.
27 Ibid., 95-100.
28 Ibid., 116.
29 Ibid., 109-112.
30 Ibid., 171.
economic power translated into political power as they replaced indigenous elites (especially sheikhs of powerful tribes) as the intermediaries between the Ottoman government and society. The merchants became urban notables as they came to dominate public life in Salt. By the early twentieth century, they held many of the elected and appointed positions in the Ottoman government’s various committees in Salt.31

Although Ottoman rule was established in the north, sheikhs’ autonomous rule persisted in the southern town of Karak. The Ottomans established their garrison in Karak in 1983, which is late relative to the establishment of Ottoman rule in the rest of Transjordan,32 and this is a factor that contributed to the Ottomans’ lack of control in Karak. However, there were established links between settled tribes and the Ottoman authority, which was part of what Droz-Vincent noted as the nascent phenomenon of politics of the notables in Transjordanian urban areas.33 Settled tribes controlled much of Karak and according to Rogan, the townspeople of Karak would “annihilate” urban merchants if they tried to control land or challenge established political and social groups.34 The Majali tribe, the hereditary rulers of the town and district and leaders of two rival alliances composed of various tribes in the region, governed the town of Karak and, according to Rogan, tribesmen were the “complete masters of the district.”35

However, the autonomy of Karak changed after a failed rebellion in 1910. After the Young Turks revolution in 1908,36 the central Ottoman government wanted to homogenize Ottoman rule in all Ottoman provinces and sub-regions, which meant the registration,

31 Rogan, 117.
32 Wilson, 54.
34 Rogan, 121.
36The Young Turks movement was composed of several reformist groups. They aimed to revive the Ottoman Empire by making the bureaucracy more effective and to limit the power of the monarch (Cleveland, 134).
taxation and conscription of all Ottoman subjects.\textsuperscript{37} When soldiers entered Karak in 1910 to conduct a census, which some residents, principally Qadar Majali (the main sheikh in Karak), suspected was a cover for conscription, Majali groups mobilized began attacking Ottoman detachments. The revolt grew and spread south to Ma’an but Ottoman military units were able to subdue the rebellion quickly.\textsuperscript{38} However, other narratives of Karak and the revolt indicate that one of the Majali sheikhs received subsidies from the Ottoman government as governor of Karak and he collected taxes on behalf of the Ottomans. The revolt was partly a response to the reduction of subsidies and the eviction of a Majali sheikh from the Ottoman administrative council in Karak. Jungen argues that portrayals of sheikhs as independent masters obscure Majali sheikhs’ compliance with the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{39}

After this failed rebellion, Karak remained firmly under Ottoman control. In 1917, the people of Karak even formed a military unit to defend the Ottoman Empire against the Arab Army, i.e. the British-supported army led by Faisal from the Hijaz.\textsuperscript{40} In fact, the revolt may have strengthened Ottoman rule. Rogan describes how the townspeople of Karak had no enthusiasm for any more secessionist movements because local merchants and residents lost 1.4 million piasters worth of assets in the revolt,\textsuperscript{41} and thus were likely tired of revolts. Although the revolt inspired Arab nationalists in Damascus to unite the tribes in the territory of Transjordan to overthrow the Ottoman government, the local people, such as those in Karak and Salt who volunteered for the army, had no such ambitions, and organized to fight for the Ottomans during World War One. The Transjordanian residents were not impressed by the retreat of the Arab Army and the British-controlled Egypt Expeditionary Force and

\textsuperscript{37} Rogan, 191-192.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 193-199.
\textsuperscript{40} Rogan, 227.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 205; Ibid., 217.
these retreats may have confirmed Transjordanian residents’ distrust of the Anglo-Hashemite partnership.  

However, the volunteers in Karak and Salt most likely did not sign up for the army solely due to a strong sense of loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. Rather, Ottoman rule exposed the local population to state institutions and benefits associated with the presence of a modernizing state, and made the territory more secure and thus more favorable for trade. The Ottoman authorities also paid some tribes for their allegiance during the war. In fact, Shryock notes that some sheikhs in the ‘Adwan tribe today do not describe the Ottoman Empire fondly. They told Shryock that the Ottomans only wanted taxes and did not care about tribal affairs. One ‘Adwani sheikh stated, “The Turks destroyed this country…There was no state, nor was there a government in Jordan. There was no law, no order, only tribes and shaykhdoms…the Turks oppressed us.” This statement presents a clear contrast between the legacy of Ottoman rule in tribal discourse how the sheikhs viewed Hashemite-ruled Jordan in the 1990s. Despite the image of lawlessness during the Ottoman period in tribal discourse, the Ottoman government actually created a semblance of a modernizing state with institutions that lasted into the mandate period. Furthermore, the ‘nascent politics of the notables’ as seen mostly in Salt and partly in Karak allowed political elites to form short-lived local governments after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the dismissal of Faisal, as discussed below.

---

42 Rogan, 233-238.
43 Ibid., 254.
46 Shryock, 13.
47 Droz-Vincent, 109.
The Creation of Transjordan

Transjordan, unlike Iraq, Syria, and Palestine, was not created as a mandate as a result of the Treaty of Sèvres at the San Remo Conference in 1920. Amir Faisal, field commander of the Arab Army and Sherif Husayn’s third son, proclaimed himself King of Syria in 1918 and Britain was content to allow Faisal to rule the territory east of the Jordan River, which fell outside Britain’s jurisdiction. According to Alon, the first year of Faisal’s rule in the area of Transjordan was relatively successful: he retained Ottoman institutions and personnel and paid local sheikhs to help the officials from Damascus collect taxes and provide services such as courts and schools. However, once Britain halved their financial support for Faisal’s government, he could no longer pay the sheikhs in Transjordan and the government started losing power. According to Alon, this power vacuum was filled by local elites, who were sheikhs from powerful, wealthy groups. The Bani Sakhr and the ‘Adwan, for example, reasserted their power by competing over land and restarting the khuwa tribute system.

After the French military defeated Faisal in Damascus in July 1920, Britain quickly began making plans to govern the territory of Transjordan, which they intended to be a buffer between Syria and Egypt because the British did not want the French to have access to the Suez Canal and from there, access to India. Many sheikhs realized that, after the fall of Faisal’s government, Britain was the most important political player in the region. They met with or sent messages to High Commissioner for Palestine Herbert Samuel and some politically weaker groups even asked for a British administration in Transjordan in the hopes that by allying themselves with the British, their political and economic power would be elevated. Encouraged by the sheikhs’ overtures, Samuel believed that a British occupation

---

49 Wilson, 44.
50 Alon, 14.
51 Ibid., 15-16.
52 Cleveland, 163.
53 Wilson, 44.
would be welcomed in Transjordan and in August 1920, Samuel met with over 600 ‘local notables’ (meaning merchant elites and tribal sheikhs) in Salt and explained that Britain would help these various groups establish local governments.\(^{54}\) After the meeting, British advisors were sent to set up local governments in Salt, ‘Ajlun, Amman, and Karak.\(^{55}\)

According to Alec Kirkbride, who was sent as an advisor to Karak and became the British Resident in Transjordan in 1939, local governments were run by ‘tribal elders’. In Karak, these leaders established a Council of Elders, the equivalent of a cabinet, and a National Government. This government failed to collect taxes but it did experience boundary disputes with other autonomous governments, such as the one established in Amman.\(^{56}\)

However, Alon concludes that the British failed at local rule. Alon claims that the first sheikhs who approached the British were the weaker local notables hoping to improve their own position vis-à-vis more powerful groups. In fact, when Abdullah’s arrival threatened to undermine British rule, the ‘Adwan group continued to support British rule.\(^{57}\) Some of the more powerful local groups did not acknowledge the governments that were set up. In ‘Ajlun, some communities refused to recognize the authority of the government set up in the town of Irbid and some tribes demanded their own separate governments. In response, Major Somerset (the British advisor in ‘Ajlun) acquiesced to their demands and set up four different governments.\(^{58}\) Tribes such as the Bani Sakhr in the Balqa’ had complete autonomy and sheikhs in Karak refused to pay taxes.\(^{59}\) In light of such failures, Abdullah’s arrival signalled an opportunity for the British to move away from the short-lived experiment of various degrees of indirect rule through local governments.

\(^{54}\) Alon, 21-22.
\(^{55}\) Ibid., 25.
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 39.
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 24-27.
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 30-33.
Abdullah, the second son of Sherif Husayn in Mecca, arrived in the southern town of Ma’an in November 1920 in the aftermath of his brother Faisal’s expulsion from Damascus. Initially a contender for the throne in Iraq in 1919, Abdullah was rebuffed by Gertrude Bell and Percy Cox, who argued that the people in Iraq wanted direct British rule. According to Wilson, Sherif Husayn and Abdullah, who were both disappointed that their dream of a unified Arab state did not become a reality. Thus they changed tactics and decided to try to re-conquer Syria. In his memoirs, Abdullah writes that he travelled to Ma’an, a town in the south of Transjordan, as a response to the Arab nationalists in both Syria who wanted him to restore the Arab throne. Abdullah arrived at Ma’an with nearly 1,000 troops and a £90,000 budget. According to his memoirs, people of Ma’an and the residents from surrounding areas welcomed his arrival. During the next four months, Abdullah established relations with local groups and received visits from tribal sheikhs and other urban merchant elites, as well as urban, educated Arab nationalists from Syria, Palestine, and northwestern Transjordan. According to Abdullah himself, the people of Syria were extremely enthusiastic about his goals but the Bedouin sheikhs he met were more cautious. However, Abdullah did manage to secure some financial support from groups such as the Bani Sakhr.

The British did not seem to welcome Abdullah’s arrival. Abdullah writes that British posters in Amman and Karak warned people not to join the “small group arrived from the Hejaz to fight France in Syria, pretending to have British support. This British Government has no connection with this group.” However, behind the scenes, the British government was deciding whether they should incorporate Abdullah into the government in

---

60 Wilson, 41.
62 Wilson, 48.
63 Alon, 39.
64 Abdullah, 194.
Transjordan.\textsuperscript{65} The legal status of the area of Transjordan remained ambiguous. Since it was not created as a separate mandate at the San Remo conference, Britain declared that the area of Transjordan was part of the still undefined mandate for Palestine but Transjordan would not be affected by the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people. In February 1921, Britain had decided that Abdullah, former contender for the throne of Iraq and currently building up a power base in Ma’an, was the appropriate Arab ruler for the new state of Transjordan.\textsuperscript{66} In March 1921, Winston Churchill, then the Secretary of State for the Colonies, arrived in Jerusalem and met Abdullah, who was warmly welcomed by Palestinians on the streets of Jerusalem. Churchill and Abdullah negotiated for three days; Abdullah demanded to rule over Iraq and Palestine as well as Transjordan, but this idea was rejected. Finally, it was agreed that Abdullah would rule Transjordan for a trial period of six months and was promised a stipend of £5,000, in exchange for keeping Transjordan quiet and preventing anti-French and anti-Zionist activities.\textsuperscript{67} As a result of Churchill’s and Abdullah’s negotiations, the state of Transjordan came into existence. Transjordan was certainly an artificial creation oriented towards British interests but the process of creation was not completely controlled by the British government. After the experience of Ottoman rule, less powerful groups realized they needed protection from the state and co-operated with the British. On the other hand, numerous sheikhs refused to co-operate with the British-imposed local governments and began to assert their own rights to tribute, a practice that the Ottomans undermined. It was only after the failure of local governments that the British began considering Abdullah to rule the territory.

\textsuperscript{65} Wilson, 49-50. According to Wilson, the British government was also negotiating with Faisal, in an attempt to placate the Hashemite family following the loss of Syria, and decided that the ‘sharifian solution’ would be to give the throne of Iraq to Faisal (49).
\textsuperscript{66} Wilson, 49-50.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 51-53.
Building the State

After his agreement with the British government, Abdullah dissolved the local governments and established three administrative provinces in ‘Ajlun, Balqa’, and Karak. In April 1921, Abdullah created the first administration, which was composed mainly of urban educated Arab nationalist exiles from Syria. During the first few years of the existence of the emirate, the British maintained control from afar and offered financial assistance, administrative guidance, and military support.68 This is evident from how the British still maintained Ottoman institutions and did not create their own programs; for the first six years of the mandate, the Anglo-Hashemite government used the same methods of land registration and taxation as the Ottoman and Faisali governments.69 During the first half of the 1920s, the British really did seem to take a more advisory than an actively interventionist role. Abdullah continued building relations with nomadic groups, as he wanted to establish future rule in Syria by securing the support of such groups.70 He governed the newly created Department of Tribal Administration and placed powerful tribes such as the Bani Sakhr under his personal jurisdiction, and removed them from the government’s jurisdiction. According to T.E. Lawrence and Herbert Samuel, Abdullah’s relations with powerful tribes became his strongest political asset.71 The government was also reliant on large tribes due to the government’s own weakness. By entrusting sheikhs with responsibilities such as facilitating conflict resolution,72 the government both recognized and created clearly demarcated political groups under the authority of those sheikhs, thus solidifying any divisions that may have existed both within and between tribal groups. Since Abdullah was reliant on nomadic groups

68 Alon, 40.
69 Michael Fischbach, State, society and land in Jordan (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 65.
70 Alon, 37.
71 Ibid., 41.
72 Ibid., 43.
as a de facto army against Wahabi raids,73 settled groups believed that Abdullah favored these groups, which were only lightly taxed and immune from the jurisdiction of the government and its nascent military, the Arab Legion.74 According to a British report in August 1921, the area controlled by the Bani Sakhr, for example, was pro-Abdullah but was extremely anti-government and the residents there refused to pay taxes and took part in illegal raids into Saudi Arabia.75 Any sense of loyalty from the powerful, nomadic tribes was to Abdullah and not to the state of Transjordan.

Britain’s stance on indirect rule changed in August 1924 due to Abdullah’s financial debts. As reports from British Colonial Office described, “Amir Abdullah is financially most unsatisfactory and politically moderately so, he is hopelessly extravagant and declines to account for his expenditure; he appears to be unpopular with the people of Transjordan.”76 According to British Representative Abramson, dissatisfaction with the government was high in 1921 in the southern town of Karak: “Generally speaking, nobody wants the Sherifian (Hashemite) Government, neither does anybody want self-government…they prefer British, or even Palestinians who would represent Great Britain.”77 But these sources may have relied too heavily on settled groups and may not have taken into account Abdullah’s relations with some powerful nomadic tribes, among which he was likely to be more popular. In August 1921, the Colonial Office reported that Abdullah had already accrued a debt of £22,000. There was further dissatisfaction with the Syrian nationalists’ activities in Transjordan, as well as Abdullah’s “petty intrigues,”78 which undermined Britain’s relationship with the French government in Syria. According to the Colonial Office, the Transjordanian

73 The term ‘Wahabi’ refers to an orthodox Muslim sect that emerged in modern-day Saudi Arabia in the eighteenth century. The family of Ibn Saud (the founder of modern-day Saudi Arabia) allied with the Wahabi movement and purported to adhere to Wahabi values.
74 Alon, 51.
75 FO 371/6373 (E11090)
76 FO 371/10102 (E6780/541/65)
77 FO 371/6373 (E11090)
78 FO 371/6373 (E9671; E11090)
government was more interested in anti-French activities than in developing Transjordan. Abdullah frequently released Syrian nationalists from prison, thus protecting Syrians who were a threat to British interests.\textsuperscript{79} By 1924, the British Colonial Office was pushed to the limit with Abdullah’s spending and sent Abdullah an ultimatum when he was returning from the Hijaz to Amman. Abdullah was told to accept the conditions in the letter or he would be prevented from returning to Amman by a detachment of the British Cavalry. The conditions were as follows: Force seven nationalists to leave the country within five days; agree to an extradition treaty with French-ruled Syria and Lebanon; abolish the Department of Tribal Administration and make ministers be responsible for the administration of Bedouin tribes, and immediately accept the British government’s measures of financial control.\textsuperscript{80} Abdullah accepted these conditions and, according to Alon, from this point onwards, the British government started paying attention to building institutions and establishing Transjordan’s borders. The British government’s presence was still weak. Nomadic groups had complete autonomy in the desert until 1930 and before the establishment of the Desert Patrol, state authority in the desert consisted almost exclusively of Abdullah’s personal influence.\textsuperscript{81} However, the British were able to control the central government to a considerable degree; Alon writes, “At times Abdullah and his Arab government reduced to the role of executors of British policy.”\textsuperscript{82}

\textit{Establishing Borders}

One of the first major tasks was to establish Transjordan’s borders with Saudi Arabia and this took the form of direct negotiations between a British delegation and representatives of Ibn Saud. According to British records, it was a matter of British policy to exclude the representative from the Transjordanian government, who would be nothing more than a

\textsuperscript{79} FO 371/6373 (E9671, E11538)  
\textsuperscript{80} FO 371/10102 (E7432/541/65)  
\textsuperscript{81} Alon, 61-62.  
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 61.
figurehead to avoid misleading ideas about the British government’s policy. The British government aimed to balance both Transjordan’s and Saudi Arabia’s interests. The border was drawn entirely by the British and Ibn Saud’s representatives and both parties recognized cross-border raiding as an act of international aggression. In theory, raids were now illegal and were considered breaches of international law. For perhaps the first time, government presence asserted itself in the desert as the Trans Jordan Frontier Force and the Royal Air Force patrolled the Transjordan-Saudi Arabia border to prevent raids. Abdullah also tried to prevent raiding by using his personal influence to persuade the tribes not to illegally move into Saudi Arabia. He took measures to stop raids within Transjordan when he brokered a peace agreement between the Bani Sakhr and the Huwaitat in 1926. The agreement forced groups to stop mutual raiding, return loot from recent raids, and cease raiding into Saudi Arabia. However, although the borders had been demarcated, borders remained unclear in popular consciousness; even the Justice Minister in 1929 did not know whether part of the region called Wadi Sirhan fell within Transjordanian or Saudi sovereignty. Furthermore, cross-border raids began again in 1928 and continued into the 1930s, which partly contributed to the conditions of poverty among rural, nomadic groups in southern Transjordan. Cross-border raids presented the most significant challenge to the Anglo-Hashemite government and Alon argues that it was during the late 1920s that British officials in Transjordan started conceiving of tribes more as subjects with rights to protection and less as a problem that required a solution.

83 IOR/L/PS/10/1144 (P3087 1925)
84 IOR/L/PS/10/1144 (P119 12926)
85 The Huwaitat is a community that can be considered a tribal confederation based in southern Transjordan. By the early twentieth century, the Huwaitat was largely nomadic (Alon, 34).
86 Alon, 77-78.
87 Ibid., 76.
88 Ibid., 80.
According to Alon, borders with Palestine and Iraq were easier to manage since they were territories under the British administration,\textsuperscript{89} and, starting in 1939, residents in Palestine were required to obtain a visa to enter Transjordan.\textsuperscript{90} The new visa requirement may have been a security response to the Great Revolt in Palestine (1936-1939) and the substantial amount of arms smuggling from Transjordan to Palestine during the revolt.\textsuperscript{91} In 1937, the British government forbade Transjordanians from carrying arms along the Jordan River without a license, a regulation that had failed before due to significant opposition from the Transjordanian residents.\textsuperscript{92} By the end of the 1930s, tighter border control helped stop cross-border raiding and bring nomadic tribes under the government’s control.\textsuperscript{93} The state slowly began gaining control of the desert and establishing its sovereignty.

**Establishing Nationality**

Alongside establishing what Transjordan was, the Transjordanian government needed to establish who Transjordanians were. Transjordan’s first nationality laws were published in the *Gazette* (the official British circular) in May 1929. According to the nationality laws promulgated by the British government, Ottoman subjects habitually resident in Transjordan on or before 6 August 1924 could be considered Transjordanian nationals. However, if a Transjordanian national stated on or before 6 August 1926 that he preferred to have a Turkish nationality, he would be required to leave Transjordan within twelve months. Furthermore, anyone could be considered a Transjordanian national if, at the time of his or her birth, his or her father was a Transjordanian national by birth or naturalization. Residents in Transjordan could become naturalized by living in Transjordan for two years immediately preceding his

\textsuperscript{89} Alon, 80-81.
\textsuperscript{90} IOR/L/PJ/7/422 (P&J 4163 1939)
\textsuperscript{91} Wilson, 125.
\textsuperscript{92} Alon, 122.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 123.
application for nationality, possessing good character, and knowing the Arabic language. 94

Women could acquire Transjordanian nationality by marriage; if her husband were to die or their marriage were to end, she would be able to declare or renounce her Transjordanian nationality within two years. 95 Nationality was gendered in terms of being conceived as a patrilineal heritage and thus contingent upon men. Furthermore, the stipulation of knowledge of the Arabic language shows that that the government’s conceptualization of who could become a Transjordanian citizen was intertwined with Arab cultural and linguistic identity.

The ‘Adwan Revolt of 1923

While the British government had almost complete control over the border and nationality laws, during the early years of the emirate, the British found it much more difficult to control the makeup of the emirate’s administration. According to Lieutenant Colonel Peake, the first commander of the Arab Legion, the Anglo-Hashemite government had difficulty finding qualified government officials from Jordan and thus, Abdullah was forced to recruit Syrian ministers. A problem emerged, Peake noted, when many senior Syrian ministers opposed Abdullah’s policy and sent raids into Syria. Their positions were subsequently given to “less politically minded persons.” 96 Peake implies that Abdullah opposed raids into Syria but other sources indicate that Abdullah supported these anti-French raids. One of the reasons for the British government’s initial dissatisfaction with Abdullah was the Syrian nationalists’ anti-French activities. Abdullah’s government was made up of mostly Syrian nationalists and, due in part to the lack of educated Transjordanians, the first government cabinet had only one ‘native’ Transjordanian. 97 At this point in time, ‘native’ meant all residents, including urban merchants of Syrian or Palestinian origin, who had been

94 The form of Arabic language referred to in the law probably refers to classical Arabic but it is unclear in the translation.
95 IOR/L/PJ/7/422 (P&J 190 1937)
97 Alon, 40.
residing in the area of Transjordan before the arrival of Abdullah and Syrian and Palestinian government administrators.

The makeup of the first government was one of the grievances that inspired the 1923 revolt. Abdullah’s reliance on nomadic tribes and thus his leniency towards them meant that some settled tribes felt they were neglected and losing influence over Abdullah. Furthermore, the settled tribes were under a different jurisdiction. Whereas the nomadic tribes were governed by Abdullah and the Department of Tribal Administration, the settled tribes were governed by the new administration made up of urban, educated nationalists from Damascus who, according to Alon, did not understand tribal customs and could not accept their goals of local autonomy. Since the establishment of Transjordan in 1921, the Balqa’ tribes (which include the ‘Adwan group, whose main sheikh was a primary actor in the 1923 revolt) were not considered Bedouin or nomadic. Shryock writes, “The term ‘Bedouin’ was a legal designation reserved by the British for certain camel-herding tribes of the eastern and southern deserts”. In fact, British general John Glubb ignored the fact that the Balqa’ tribes were migratory and considered them fellahin or peasants because they also cultivated the soil. Colonial designations of which tribes were Bedouin reflect colonial preconceptions of the ‘martial race’, i.e. Bedouin, being suited for military duties. According to Glubb, the Bedouin tribesman’s favorite occupation was warfare. Glubb describes the Bedouin as “typical surviving examples of that purely Arab way of life, which amongst other Arab communities, has come to a greater or lesser degree diluted by mixture with foreign influences.” ‘Sedentary’ and ‘Bedouin’ became two very distinct categories under the

98 Alon, 44.
99 Shryock, 69.
100 Ibid., 70.
102 Glubb, 9.
Anglo-Hashemite government and left no room for liminality. Groups such as the ‘Adwan did not fit the British definition of ‘Bedouin’ and were thus categorized as sedentary, despite the group’s pastoral nomadic practices.

Perhaps the most important aspect of being considered Bedouin was the government’s leniency in terms of tax collection and this issue was the ‘Adwan tribe’s main source of discontent. According to Alon, tax collectors (reinforced by the military) demanded that villagers in the Balqa’ region to not only pay current taxes but also taxes that had remained uncollections taxes 1918 to 1920, while the ‘Adwan tribe’s main rivals, the nomadic Bani Sakhr, were exempt from taxation on their land in the eastern Balqa’. The catalyst for the revolt was an incident in August 1923 when the ‘Adwan and ‘Ajarma groups refused hospitality to the Bani Sakhr. Abdullah was called to intervene but when he sent military support to Bani Sakhr sheikh Mithqal al-Fayiz and did not meet with Sultan al-‘Adwan as promised, he was perceived as favoring the Bani Sakhr. This pushed Sultan al-‘Adwan, the leading sheikh of the ‘Adwan, to call on sheikhs of other tribes in the Balqa’ region and Salt to join him fight against Abdullah’s maladministration. According to a British translation of the letter from leading Circassians and sheikhs in the Balqa’ to British Resident Philby, the sheikhs wrote:

We inform you of the present situation caused by the Amir Abdullah by his refusal of the legitimate demands of the people. Consequently some of those who have demanded justice have been imprisoned while others have fled, all this without any reason except that they asked for their rights. He is showing his friendship to Bani Sakhr, whose wickedness is evident and is showing hostility to those who are obedient to the Government. We cannot tolerate anymore to be in such a state.

---

103 Liminality, as conceptualized by Shail Mayaram in her article “Beyond ethnicity? Being Hindu and Muslim in South Asia”, can be used to describe the state of being in between two statuses, simultaneously inhabiting two categories while not fitting the categories, defined by dominant state and religious discourses, completely (Mayaram, 7).
104 Alon, 53-54.
105 Ibid., 54.
106 FO 371/9009 (E10398/1165/65)
Sultan al-‘Adwan was probably able to gain support from notables in Salt, as well as support from Circassian leaders, because they had been part of the elite under Ottoman rule and may have also been displaced from power by the new political elite dominated by Syrian nationalists and nomadic groups. In September, the Arab Legion put down the ‘Adwan’s uprising and Sultan al-‘Adwan and his family escaped to Jebel Druze in Syria. A few months after the revolt, Sherif Husayn visited Amman and granted amnesty to the ‘Adwani sheikhs. This amnesty, along with the recognition of the sheikhs’ leadership, marked the beginning of the incorporation of the ‘Adwani tribes into the state.\textsuperscript{107} To this day, members of ‘Adwani groups continue to play leading roles in Jordanian politics and the military.\textsuperscript{108} Interestingly, the ‘Adwan revolt is remembered today as a revolt against British oppression and not against Abdullah.\textsuperscript{109} However, from the letter sent to Philby quoted above, it seems that the ‘Adwan’s discontent was very much directed towards Abdullah and they seemed to have requested help from the British government. The ‘Adwan’s historical memory is an example of how political identities of tribal groups have become intertwined with the Hashemite monarchy, a theme which will be discussed in the third chapter.

The revolt also developed from a local tax affair to a general protest against the government. The ‘Adwan also demanded a national representative assembly and increased inclusion of native Transjordanians in the government. According to Wilson, “it was the inclusion of these demands which led some to see Philby’s hand in the affair.”\textsuperscript{110} One of the main sources of disagreement between Abdullah and British Resident Philby was that Philby wanted to create more democratic institutions and pushed for a constitutional regime with an elected representative body.\textsuperscript{111} Wilson argues that the British government had been trying to incite indigenous opposition to the Syrian nationalists in Abdullah’s government since 1921.

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{107} Alon, 55-56. \\
\textsuperscript{108} Shryock, 233. \\
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 90. \\
\textsuperscript{110} Wilson, 78. \\
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 76.
\end{flushright}
and the British advisors approved of the idea of ‘Transjordan for the Transjordanians’. By reinforcing a discourse of autochthony, the British hoped to undermine the appeal of Arab nationalism in Transjordan.¹¹²

During the ‘Adwan revolt, some educated Transjordanians, such as urban merchants and new civil servants, also supported Sultan al-‘Adwan and formed a broader opposition movement. The merchants and professionals were left out of his newly formed political elite and thus banded together to form an opposition movement. Perhaps the participation of these educated Transjordanians informed the ‘Adwan’s demand for the expulsion of the Syrian nationalists from the government and their replacement with native Transjordanians.¹¹³ Massad credits one of these educated Transjordanians, Mustafa Wahbah al-Tell (penname ‘Arar), for coining the phrase ‘Transjordan for the Transjordanians’.¹¹⁴ ‘Arar conveyed his opposition to the Anglo-Hašemite project in his poetry and interestingly, his concept of ‘foreigner’ includes both the British and the Hašemites. In his poems, Amman, the symbol for Abdullah’s rule, destroyed the natural beauty of Transjordan and imposed foreign rule over Transjordanians.¹¹⁵ Although ‘Arar seemed to question the Hašemite monarchy’s legitimacy, according to Anderson, the opposition movement’s use of Transjordanian nationalist discourse meant that they recognized the legitimacy of the state.¹¹⁶ There is a difference between one man’s poetry and a whole opposition movement’s goals but it is significant that ‘Arar painted the Hašemites as foreigners. This notion of the Hašemites’ foreignness virtually disappears as the official discourse for Jordanian national identity developed and the Hašemites became stand-ins for all Jordanians.

After the ‘Adwan revolt and the subsequent British ultimatum to Abdullah, most Syrian nationalists were expelled from his government in 1925. Echoing Peake’s claims, the

¹¹² Wilson, 64-65.
¹¹³ Alon, 54; Anderson, 45.
¹¹⁴ Anderson, 45.
¹¹⁵ Ibid., 46.
¹¹⁶ Ibid., 43.
new British Representative Henry Cox nevertheless believed that there was insufficient educated local manpower and, in 1926, Transjordan started recruiting Palestinians, many of whom were Christians.\textsuperscript{117} Many of these Palestinian families, such as the Rifa‘i family, have become associated with the East Bank in Jordanian consciousness today and their Palestinian roots have been forgotten. Although Abdullah, from the 1930s onwards, gradually began incorporating Transjordanians into the administration, non-Transjordanians, mostly Palestinian and British officials, continued to hold the top positions in the government until Jordan’s independence in 1946.\textsuperscript{118} Wilson argues that Abdullah feared that bringing local notables in direct contact with Britain would supplant his own influence with Britain. Abdullah believed that his power was already limited and tenuous, and bringing Transjordanians, who were more rooted in local society than he was, into the state government could challenge his role as the intermediary between the British and local society.\textsuperscript{119}

Although they were excluded from the bureaucracy, local notables were able to participate in politics through the Legislative Council. This was established in accordance with the 1928 Anglo-Transjordan agreement.\textsuperscript{120} At the Legislative Council’s inception, fourteen members were elected from three electoral districts: ‘Ajlun, ‘Balqa, and Karak. The minorities were overrepresented compared to the population, with reserved seats for four Christians and two Circassians out of fourteen. The tribes defined as Bedouin were excluded from the election process and two tribal representatives, one from the north and one from the south, were appointed by a government commission.\textsuperscript{121} According to Wilson, Abdullah did

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{117} Alon, 62.
\textsuperscript{118} Anderson, 53-54.
\textsuperscript{119} Wilson, 96.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 97.
\end{flushleft}
appreciate this “emerging Transjordanian elite,” as the Legislative Council was able to pass laws that supported Abdullah’s interests, rather than those of the British advisors.

**Politicization of Bedouin Group Identities**

Bedouin groups were already political but the politicization of Bedouin group identities denotes the process by which tribal group identities come to express different power relations between and within tribes in terms of access to the state. The separation of the Bedouin from the electorate is just one example of how the government treated those who were considered Bedouin as separate citizens. As discussed previously, Bedouin tribes fell under the jurisdiction of tribal or customary law, rather than civil law. Scholarship about British tribal law in India suggests that so-called tribal laws were really impositions of a colonial vision of what tribal law was, rather than a true integration of existing values. Nevertheless, customary law was an important characteristic of colonial indirect rule. According to Mamdani, “The point was to go beyond an understanding of custom in the singular to unravelling its many strands, thereby to identify the authoritarian strand so as to sculpt it and build on it, sanctioning the product officially as customary law.” This was possible by working with a ‘culturally legitimate’ group and disseminating this elite’s customs to the masses. In Transjordan, customary law was based on the customs of powerful nomadic tribes. For example, the government incorporated the tribe as a basic administrative unit for purposes such as tax collection and distribution. The government also endorsed tribal practices of conflict resolution and collective responsibility to improve public security and lower crime rates. This was made possible by recognizing the authority of tribal

---

122 Wilson, 98.
123 An example of such scholarship is the article “Customary Law and Shariat in Punjab” by David Gilmartin in Shariat and Ambiguity, ed. K.P. Ewing.
125 Mamdani, 865.
sheikhs and giving sheikhs the responsibility of guaranteeing security, preventing crimes, and arresting criminals.\(^{126}\) Abdullah’s personal relations with Bedouin tribes also allowed him to establish some semblance of control as he appealed to sheikhs to keep law and order and start collecting taxes. Cooperation with Abdullah also allowed sheikhs to increase their influence and preserve their leadership within the tribal structure.\(^{127}\) Although the government gave sheikhs new responsibilities in terms of maintaining security, the British land program (1927-1950) also removed sheikhs’ customary responsibility in terms of land settlement.\(^{128}\)

One of the factors that may have incentivized cooperation with the government was the extreme poverty in the rural areas of Transjordan in the 1930s. Severe drought reduced agricultural yield and pastoral assets drastically. According to a British Royal Air Force intelligence summary from March 1934, the Bani Hassan tribe, which became settled in the Jerash area in the north, was in a “critical state of poverty”: the tribe had lost most of its cattle in the last four years due to the drought that afflicted Transjordan in the early 1930s. The Bani Hassan had not been able to raise a single crop and around 1,600 people were “absolutely destitute.”\(^{129}\) Accordingly, the Arab Legion and the Trans Jordan Frontier Force provided relief and found work for 400 men.\(^{130}\)

The intensified raids from Saudi Arabia, beginning in 1928, exacerbated the critical state of rural areas. Abdullah, who was still the authority on tribal affairs in 1928, attempted to prevent affected tribes in Transjordan from raiding the Ikhwan in retaliation and promised the return of the loot from Ibn Saud. However, the loot was not returned and Abdullah started losing control of some Transjordanian groups when they started raiding Saudi territory in

---

\(^{126}\) Alon, 65-66.

\(^{127}\) Ibid., 68.

\(^{128}\) According to Fischbach, instead of sheikhs determining and allocating legal title over land, as had been customary before the land program, the government now had the sole authority to investigate every claim to land rights, resolve land disputes, and divide collectively-owned land permanently (105-109).

\(^{129}\) FO 371/17882 (E1794/1794/31)

\(^{130}\) Ibid.
return. The British Foreign Office was more sympathetic to Ibn Saud’s claims that Transjordan had started the raids and embarked on a series of programs to prevent raids from Transjordan into Saudi Arabian territory. The first was to create the Tribal (Bedouin) Control Board and this was truly a mechanism that allowed British institutional control over tribal affairs and limited Abdullah’s use of his personal influence. This institution aimed to strengthen the state but not the ruler. However, Abdullah’s personal influence remained relevant when the Board also changed the social structure of the Huwaitat group. The group was composed of two branches, one led by Hamad bin Jazi, and the other led by ‘Awda abu Taya. During the 1920s, ‘Awda let his relations with Abdullah flounder while Hamad cultivated his relationship with Abdullah. Therefore, it is no surprise that after ‘Awda’s death, Abdullah declared at a Board meeting in 1930 that Hamad bin Jazi was the ‘paramount sheikh’ of the two branches. By changing and institutionalizing the balance of power between the two branches of the Huwaitat, Anglo-Hashemite rule made Hamad bin Jazi’s role as a tribal leader dependent on government recognition and thus politicized his tribal identity.

In November 1930, the British wanted an even greater degree of control, at the expense of Abdullah’s power, over nomadic groups in the rural area and brought John Glubb to Transjordan. Glubb had previously served to prevent raiding in Iraq and the British government wanted Glubb to perform a similar task in Transjordan. According to Glubb’s memoirs, many Huwaitat tribesmen, whose leader Hamad bin Jazi was politically legitimized by Abdullah’s support, did not trust the Anglo-Hashemite government. They suffered severely from Ikhwan raids and Glubb stated that if the Huwaitat continued to not cooperate with the government, “there could be only one end to so senseless and obstinate a struggle.

131 Alon, 85.
132 Ibid., 87.
133 Ibid., 89.
the virtual extinction of the Huwaitat as a tribe.\textsuperscript{134} As mentioned previously, the plight of the Huwaitat is an example of the larger rift developing between Abdullah and the tribes. According to Alon, by August 1930, the total losses of Transjordanian tribes were 3,662 camels, 5,270 sheep, fifty killed and £1,020 worth of property. No action was taken by British forces to prevent Ikhwani raids. Relations between Abdullah’s government and the tribesmen who had suffered these losses began to deteriorate. By 1933, the combination of drought, locust attacks on crops, Ikhwani raids and British inaction, and the Great Depression caused a severe famine in Transjordan.\textsuperscript{135}

The extreme poverty made groups in rural areas more amenable to other British policies. Glubb spent weeks among the Huwaitat groups to convince them to stop raiding and start cooperating with the government to ensure their own survival. He traveled without an escort and thus disassociated himself from the Arab Legion, which Alon argues helped Glubb gain people’s trust. In order to prevent raiding, Glubb established the Desert Patrol under the Arab Legion. Before long, recruits from Huwaitat began enlisting.\textsuperscript{136} Glubb states that by March 1931, the Arab Legion had tents, trucks, uniforms, and around thirty soldiers. Raiding had virtually ceased.\textsuperscript{137} Glubb recruited sons of leading sheikhs to not only convey the prestige of the Legion but also to tie their families to the government and prevent subversion of government policies. Furthermore, the economic incentives were clear: a soldier’s salary could support several families during the famine in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{138} By the 1940s, the Arab Legion had expanded as a response to the Palestinian Revolt, and had become the most important source of government employment. Most of the soldiers were men from nomadic groups.\textsuperscript{139} Glubb concludes:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{134} Glubb, 77.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} Alon, 91-92.
  \item \textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 97.
  \item \textsuperscript{137} Glubb, 95.
  \item \textsuperscript{138} Alon, 97-99.
  \item \textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 119.
\end{itemize}
In Trans-Jordan raiding, which had been practised for centuries, was abolished in a few months without inflicting a single casualty on the tribes and without putting a single tribesman in prison…and finally these tribesmen, who had for centuries regarded the Government as their natural enemy, enlisted in their thousands in the Arab Legion, and have ever since been amongst the most loyal and patriotic of the citizens of Trans-Jordan.\textsuperscript{140}

Glubb also codified customary law by setting up tribal courts, which maintained sheikhs as judges but integrated them into the state structure.\textsuperscript{141} Alongside employment opportunities, Glubb distributed clothes, flour, or small sums of money to mainly women and children, helped implement relief projects, and introduced agricultural, health care, and educational initiatives in the desert.\textsuperscript{142}

By institutionalizing tribes’ and sheikhs’ relationships with the state and codifying (and thus changing) some tribal customs, the Anglo-Hashemite government was able to politicize tribal identities. These tribal identities were no longer just expressions of relationships between tribes as equivalent players within the territory Transjordan. Tribal identities solidified power differences within or between tribes and shaped how certain groups interacted with the state and what benefits these groups could receive from the state. The politicization of tribal identity became a dominant feature in Transjordanian politics and tribal networks are still deployed and expressed for state benefits today.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{140} Glubb, 113.
\textsuperscript{141} Alon, 100-101.
\textsuperscript{142} Glubb’s policies contributed to the success of bringing the sphere of government rule to the desert. Alon notes Glubb’s discourse of ‘human imperialism’ that Glubb used to describe his policies (102). In my view, this discourse is certainly present in Glubb’s memoirs: Glubb’s stories of teaching the martial but gentle tribesmen how to read convey colonial and Orientalist notions of paternalistic superiority over the martial but inferior race (Glubb, 174; Glubb, 99). Other scholars, such as Massad, approach Glubb’s policy differently. Massad argues that Glubb’s policies repressed and erased Bedouin customs that were incompatible with imperial interests, such as raiding and coffee-drinking (later substituted for tea due to the British Empire’s trade networks) and produced new ‘traditions’ that were later taken to be characteristic of authentic Bedouin culture (159).
\textsuperscript{143} Politicization of tribal identities was also present during the Ottoman period, as the cooperation of the Bani Sakhr with the Ottoman administration indicates, but to a much smaller degree as the Ottoman authorities did not have the same degree of state control as the Anglo-Hashemite government.
Discourses of Identity: Colonial, Hashemite, and the Opposition

In her examination of Jordan’s history, Wilson argues that mandatory Transjordan was unable to develop a nationalist movement due to the lack of demographic or social factors, such as cities, a sizeable middle class whose interests were compromised by European interference, and financial resources required for a nationalist movement. She states unequivocally that there was little opposition to Abdullah’s pro-British policy in Transjordan and that “in the twenty years of the British mandate, no structures of independent political organization had emerged, nor had the demographic or economic structure of Transjordan changed sufficiently to allow effective nationalist politics.” In this section, I will explore colonial, Hashemite, and political opposition discourses about national identity to examine Wilson’s claim. As expressed in colonial and Hashemite discourses during this period, loyalty to the Hashemites required good relations with the British. Therefore, there were constraints on the emergence of a massive nationalist movement that could be both anti-colonial and pro-Hashemite. However, there were moments of political resistance during the 1920s when political communities denounced both Abdullah and the British by painting them as foreigners. Although these moments may not fit Wilson’s definition of an anti-colonial nationalist movement, they nevertheless indicate anti-colonial sentiment framed by a discourse of autochthony.

Discourse not only reflects social realities but can shape social realities. In his memoirs about Jordan, Glubb not only describes his personal social reality but constructs his prescriptive vision of what Jordan should be. Glubb describes tribesmen as “amongst the most loyal and patriotic citizens of Trans-Jordan.” Note that he describes them as citizens and not subjects, despite the lack of strong democratic principles in this polity, which was a

144 Wilson, 90.
145 Ibid., 134.
146 This argument is an interpretation of Michel Foucault’s theories about the relationship between language and power. Refer to the discussion of the term ‘discourse’ on pp. 9-10.
147 Glubb, 113.
monarchy under colonial control. Massad argues that Glubb was not a proponent of democracy in Transjordan;\textsuperscript{148} he believed that Arabs were more suited to traditional dictatorships and that if democracy were to be established in the Middle East, it would require centuries.\textsuperscript{149} So what was Glubb’s concept of Transjordanian citizenship if it did not involve democracy and why did Glubb use it? Perhaps Glubb felt that the essence of citizenship was individuals having a stake in the nation-state and that this would produce the most unshakeable sense of loyalty to the state. He wanted to inspire true love for Anglo-Hashemite rule, rather than convey a relationship of domination and subjugation.

Glubb also believed that loyalty to the state superseded any sentiments of Arab nationalism. In response to attacks from Palestine on the Arab Legion along the Palestinian-Transjordanian border during the Palestinian Revolt in 1938, Glubb states,

The Arab leaders in Damascus had mistaken the spirit of the people of Trans-Jordan, who indeed had been ardent supports of the Palestine Arabs, but who were at the same time extremely proud of their country and of the good order and loyalty which reigned in it. They were unwilling to be forced to rebel against their own Government by an invasion from Syria or Palestine, and indeed resented the attempt.\textsuperscript{150}

Although Glubb wrote that every man in Transjordan supported the cause of Palestinian Arabs against Zionist political and military groups,\textsuperscript{151} Glubb believed that Arabs were more individualistic than Europeans and less likely to participate in mass movements. He writes, “Many volunteers in Trans-Jordan forded the river and joined the rebels in Palestine fighting the British. Yet the attitude of Arabs of Trans-Jordan to ‘their’ Englishmen never perceptibly varied.”\textsuperscript{152} Glubb seems to make a distinction between Arab nationalism and Transjordanian patriotism, the latter of which is intertwined with support for Anglo-Hashemite rule in Transjordan. Similarly, Glubb’s discourse about Transjordanian patriotism can be interpreted more as Glubb’s prescription rather than empirical description.

\textsuperscript{148} It is unclear how Glubb conceptualized democracy as described in his memoirs.
\textsuperscript{149} Massad, 114-115.
\textsuperscript{150} Glubb, 237.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 242.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 231.
When Abdullah first arrived in Transjordan, he had used the discourse of Arab nationalism to legitimize his actions. In response to the letter of the Governor of Salt, Mazhar Bey Raslan, asking him what his intentions were, Abdullah had written: “I am visiting Transjordan to occupy it, as directed by the Royal Arab Government of Syria. I am now acting for His Majesty King Faisal, and it is your duty to receive your orders from Maan.”

This statement clearly expresses the notion of a unified Arab state in which the area of Transjordan fell under the jurisdiction of the ‘Royal Arab Government’, despite Faisal’s loss of Syria and defeat and expulsion of his government. This notion of Arab nationalism rested on the idea that all Arabs, no matter what their current state or jurisdiction, were part of the Arab nation. When Abdullah left Ma’an for Amman in March 1921, he addressed the people who saw him off at the train station with these words: “My wish as I leave you is that you may cease to think of yourselves as belonging to small geographical districts; but that you may learn to be loyal to the great Arab brotherhood which embraces us all.”

Previously, he told Syrian nationalists that “the Arabs are one body; if one member suffers the whole is affected… I say without hesitation that I support the monarchy and the re-establishment of King Faisal.” Abdullah clearly uses the discourse of Arab nationalism to legitimize Hashemite rule. What is interesting is that he urges the residents of Ma’an to abandon their regional identities and embrace their most important identity: that of members of the Arab nation. He did not call for Transjordanian nationalism because he did not intend on ruling Transjordan at this time; his sights were set on Syria.

This discourse of Arab nationalism continues through the 1940s. In 1941, Abdullah made a speech to the Arab Legion after they helped restore the Iraqi Hashemite king to power after a coup. He said:

---

153 Abdullah, 193.
154 Ibid., 199.
155 Ibid., 191.
Long live the brave and victorious Arab Legion, and may the Arab nation achieve her national ambitions through God and the love of his Prophet, and with the aid of our ally Great Britain. Let us stand by her as she stood by us, and let us help her in her difficult worldwide task.\(^{156}\)

At this point in time, Abdullah intertwined achieving the goal of the Arab nation with the help of Great Britain. This statement can be seen as an attempt to legitimize British rule in Transjordan using Arab nationalism. Perhaps this was a response to the anti-colonial protests that erupted in Amman when the Arab Legion was deployed to restore Hashemite rule in Iraq. Furthermore, Abdullah had a reputation of being Britain’s lackey and many young Transjordanians protested his continued reliance on Britain during the Palestinian Revolt, which undermined the unity of the Arab nation. According to Wilson, by the 1940s, Abdullah had few political supporters in Syria and was concerned about the activities of other Arab leaders who promoted their own ideas of Arab unity. This was because Abdullah did not command the same influence as Nuri al-Sa’id in Iraq or Nahas Pasha in Egypt, who were also both pro-British. They threatened Abdullah’s position as a contender for the Arab throne, should Britain wish to create it.\(^{157}\) By intertwining Arab nationalism and support for the British, Abdullah attempted to not only legitimize his own rule but also showcase his significance and loyalty to the British. In some passages from his memoirs, it is unclear if Abdullah was referring to Arab nationalism or Transjordanian nationalism.\(^{158}\) But one thing is clear: Abdullah always explicitly tied nationalism with loyalty and obedience to Hashemite rule.

Transjordanian anti-colonial nationalist movements did not emerge during the mandate period because Britain controlled the Hashemite state. How could anyone claim to be loyal to the state but not to the British when the Hashemites proclaimed that the Arab nation could only be realized with the help of the British? However, although a fully-fledged

\(^{156}\) Abdullah, 238.
\(^{157}\) Wilson, 137; Ibid., 140.
\(^{158}\) Refer to pp.199-200 in Abdullah’s memoirs.
nationalist movement does not seem to emerge in Transjordan, the main political opposition force that challenged Hashemite rule during the 1950s was established during the mandate period. A political movement led by young, educated, urban Transjordanians emerged alongside the ‘Adwan revolt in 1923 and a discourse of autochthony was utilized to frame their demands for greater political participation for Transjordanians.

Similar political opposition forces were extremely visible in 1928, when Britain and Transjordan signed the Anglo-Transjordanian Agreement. This agreement made Transjordan an ‘independent emirate’, rather than a region in the Palestinian mandate, subject to British control over foreign affairs, defense, and finance. Britain also had the right to exploit Transjordan’s natural resources as it so wished and Transjordan would pay for the expenses of the British Resident and his staff. In return, Transjordan would receive an annual subsidy for its armed forces from Britain.\(^{159}\) The agreement also established the Organic Law, which recognized Abdullah as the head of state and created the Executive and Legislative Councils. Abdullah appointed members to the Executive Council whereas members of the Legislative Council were elected; non-Transjordanians were not allowed to run for election to the Legislative Council.\(^{160}\) According to Anderson, opposition forces protested the Organic Law because they believed it was more reflective of Anglo-Hashemite interests than those of the people. For example, the Legislative Council seemed to fall short of being a legislative body truly representative of the nation as its laws could only be implemented if Abdullah and the British Resident gave their approval. Various strikes and protests arose: the *souq* in Irbid closed for a week in April 1928; people refused to go to work for three days in Salt, where schoolboys threw onions at Abdullah; and a student demonstration in Amman pushed Abdullah to review final school exams himself and allowed students to pass based on their

\(^{159}\) Anderson, 48-49.  
\(^{160}\) Ibid., 49.
political loyalty. An Amman-based newspaper, whose editor was Syrian, denounced Abdullah as a traitor and alienator of the freedom of his people.161

By the late 1920s, this political opposition movement was no longer limited to leading sheikhs or urban merchants; it also involved new Syrian and Palestinian immigrants, who perhaps did not fit a discourse of Transjordanian autochthony but shared Transjordanian notables’ interests in independence and greater democracy. In July 1928, about 150 notables, sheikhs, and intellectuals met at a coffee house in Amman and formed the National Conference. Their goal was to limit Abdullah’s powers and implement a truly constitutional monarchy.162 From 1928 to 1929, the National Conference organized petitions from the residents of Karak and ‘Ajlun to send to the Secretary of the League of Nations. The petitioners protested the conduct of the British mandatory power in Transjordan and the Anglo-Transjordanian Agreement by referring to the agreement between Major Somerset and Transjordanian representatives in 1920: that the independent Transjordanian government would have an Arab amir and a House of Representatives; that the independent government would have no connection with the Palestine Government (the British mandatory government); and that Transjordan would be annexed to Syria whenever the Syrian Unity becomes an established fact. The petitioners argued, “His Majesty’s Government commenced to rob us gradually of our rights,”163 as British-imposed laws were incompatible with local customs and there were no native officers in the army, and they requested Transjordan to be an “Arab Independent State within its natural and known boundaries.”164 The last statement indicates that the petitioners, similar to the protesters in 1923, accepted Transjordan’s legitimacy in terms of its boundaries and statehood; in fact, they believe these boundaries are natural. No one contested British-imposed boundaries. By arguing that Transjordan’s

---

161 Anderson, 50.
162 Ibid., 50.
163 FO 371/13748 (E2608/318/65)
164 Ibid.
boundaries are natural, the petitioners seem to believe that Transjordan is in fact an organic
nation and not an artificial entity created by British interests. Clearly, these Transjordanians
could conceive of Transjordan as a nation and by extension, legitimized their own
subjectivities as Transjordanians.

Needless to say, the petitioners did not receive the response they wanted from the
League of Nations as mandatory power continued until 1946. But these protests may have
impacted the government’s policy; during the 1930s, the Anglo-Hashemite government
began employing more Transjordanians, including those who had opposed Anglo-Hashemite
rule, in the bureaucracy. Even the poet ‘Arar, who denounced Abdullah as a foreigner,
became a teacher employed by the state government. According to Anderson, “in the eyes of
many, Hashemite ‘nationalism’s task’ was not to ‘overcome the subordination of the
colonized middle class’ but to bring more people into this national project.”¹⁶⁵ In essence, a
nationalist movement did not emerge because the urban, educated middle-class that was the
proponent of anti-colonial nationalism in other nation-states was subsumed into the Anglo-
Hashemite state bureaucracy.

However, political opposition was still present as the state educators often propagated
Arab nationalism. Jordanian history textbooks were not published until the mid-1950s and the
state could not observe all its teachers in their classrooms. According to Anderson, teachers
often framed their lessons with Arab nationalism and not Transjordanian exclusivity.
Anderson clarifies the conflict between Transjordanian and Arab identities:

Transjordan became a reality of the students’ identity but failed to wipe out the larger
cultural affiliation symbolized by Arab history, language, and literature. The problems
for the students were: Which national identity holds resonance in these students’ lives?
To which ‘community’ did they belong?¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Anderson, 57.
¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 68.
Furthermore, many privileged young men were able to study at secondary schools and universities elsewhere in the Middle East and, according to British reports, were politicized further with ideas of Arab nationalism. After the annexation of the West Bank, the notion of Arab nationalism became the political opposition’s main discourse to frame their demands. This implies that the previous opposition discourse, the discourse of autochthony, was no longer viable for political opposition because Jordan’s identity as a nation-state became intertwined with the Hashemite monarchy. Therefore, protesters needed to use the ideals of the unified Arab state to undermine Jordan’s legitimacy as a nation-state and the Hashemites’ legitimacy as Jordan’s rulers.

Amman

Although it lacked monumental spaces during the mandate period, Amman was an essential component of the Anglo-Hashemite government’s performances of legitimacy. Amman was the first Circassian settlement in the territory of Transjordan during the Ottoman period, as discussed previously in this chapter. The Circassian settlers are a fundamental part of Amman’s founding narrative and vice versa. Interestingly, Shami argues that Amman was not even the largest Circassian colony but it is the most prevalent in Jordanian Circassians’ narratives of settlement. The dominance of Amman in the Circassians’ narrative could be due to the fact that Amman is the nation’s capital. By intertwining Amman and the Circassian community, the Circassians have the “greatest proof of their contemporary citizenship.”

Amman was built by the Circassian community and therefore, the Circassians participated fully in building the present Hashemite state. Amman is the Circassians’ marker of belonging in the Arab-majority nation.

Similarly, Amman also became the marker of Hashemite influence and belonging. According to Wilson, upon Abdullah’s arrival in Amman in March 1921, Amman was little more than a village with between 2,500 and 5,000 inhabitants. The Circassian settlers formed the core of the population and, as an ethnic minority, the Circassian community required government protection and thus welcomed Abdullah’s arrival.\textsuperscript{169} Wilson argues that Abdullah chose Amman as the capital of Transjordan for political reasons: Salt, the largest urban center in Transjordan at the time, was too close to Palestine and its settled inhabitants experienced a long history of conflict with nomadic groups, including some nomadic men in Abdullah’s entourage. Amman did not have such a long history of conflict and it was also strategically advantageous as it was located on the Hijaz Railway.\textsuperscript{170} With a core population that was dependent on Abdullah and a distinct lack of urban merchants and sheikhs, who could potentially challenge Abdullah’s power, Amman was the logical choice for the center of Abdullah’s rule. According to Anderson, Amman lacked infrastructure before Abdullah’s arrival so all physical and social development in the city symbolized the growth of Hashemite rule.\textsuperscript{171}

By the late 1920s, Amman’s population grew to approximately 10,000 inhabitants, due to its new position as the state’s capital and the influx of immigrants from Syria after the failed Syrian revolt between 1925 and 1927. Infrastructure improved as streets were widened and new shops and houses were built. Prior to 1925, Abdullah moved around with his tents and entourage around the country until his new home, Ragadan Palace in what is now downtown Amman, was completed.\textsuperscript{172} However, according to Anderson, the majority of the government’s budget was spent on building the military, rather than the government, and Amman still suffered from a lack of physical infrastructure for its government branches.

\textsuperscript{169} Wilson, 61.  
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 62.  
\textsuperscript{171} Anderson, 39.  
\textsuperscript{172} Alon, 64.
Anderson argues that without physical symbols of government power, the Anglo-Hashemite government relied on symbolic acts to display and perpetuate government power. These performances included Abdullah leading a procession from his palace to the mosque every Friday; military drills after border raids made the regime look weak; ceremonies to award medals to soldiers; and the gunshot every noon from the Roman citadel, a practice which continued until 1930.\textsuperscript{173} The last practice is especially interesting because it connected contemporary Anglo-Hashemite rule with Roman rule, thus creating a narrative of continued centralized rule that culminates in the Hashemite dynasty. The use of ancient sites and history to legitimize contemporary Hashemite rule will be explored further in the third and fourth chapters.

**Conclusion**

From its conception as a state, Transjordan was inextricably linked with Hashemite rule. Although the state was not built from scratch and retained Ottoman institutions during the first few years of Anglo-Hashemite rule, the development of institutions in Transjordan reshaped people’s relations with the state and with each other. The state extended its control to an unprecedented degree in the desert: The land program removed land from the domain of sheikhs and placed it under the domain of the state and institutions such as the Arab Legion stopped cross-border raids through patrols and the recruitment of members of nomadic groups. A political elite made up of urban, educated Syrians and Palestinians emerged as a political elite and nomadic groups were officially categorized as Bedouin, which meant they were under separate jurisdiction from the rest of the population, and their powerful sheikhs’ responsibilities and authority were institutionalized. These new elites displaced the former urban merchants and semi-sedentary groups, which were the former intermediaries between

\textsuperscript{173} Anderson, 40; Alon, 64.
the Ottoman administration and local society, in Salt and the northern region. The former elites joined forces to create a political opposition movement that lasted well into the 1950s.

Despite being a foreigner who worked with other foreign powers to support his state, Abdullah was able to gain the loyalty of the new residents of Transjordan and create a lasting dynasty. He was able to do so through institutions. Although Abdullah slowly lost personal control of relations with Bedouin tribes, who were initially his biggest political assets, the British were able to create sustainable relations between the Bedouin and the state. The Bedouin groups were no longer merely personally acquainted with Abdullah but had a vested interest in the state. The Ottomans had introduced benefits associated with state institutions and the Anglo-Hashemite continued providing these benefits: employment, security, education, health services, telecommunications systems, and roads. Anderson argues that the goal of the government was to consistently link prosperity with the existence of the Hashemite state. By reinforcing the relationship between benefits and the existence of the state, the Hashemite state gained support from nomadic groups and emerging merchants in the cities. Even those who had opposed Abdullah’s methods of rule in 1923 found employment within the state structure. Furthermore, Amman grew in people’s consciousness, due to its role as the center of all the state institutions that had begun to frame public life.

As the state began to play a more active role in the public domain and in people's experiences of public life, the idea that Transjordan was Hashemite and the Hashemites were Transjordanian grew stronger. This relationship was certainly perpetrated by British officials who wanted to increase Transjordanian loyalty, but not anti-colonial nationalism, at the expense of anti-colonial Arab nationalism. Thus, the British encouraged loyalty to the Hashemites as the basis of Transjordanian patriotism. The Hashemites were no longer foreigners but thought of as Transjordanian themselves. The Hashemites’ role as a symbol of

---

174 Anderson, 18-19.
the Transjordanian nation-state may explain the shift in discourse from one of autochthony to one of Arab nationalism among members of the political opposition. The discourses of Arab nationalism and pan-Jordanian identity will be explored further in the next chapter.
**Discourses of Pan-Jordanianism: The Annexation of the West Bank, 1948-1967**

**Introduction**

By the end of the mandate period, two discourses or imaginaries of the Jordanian nation had emerged. One was a discourse of autochthony, meaning that Transjordan belonged to its indigenous inhabitants, i.e. those who had lived there before the arrival of Abdullah and Syrian nationalist migrants during the 1920s. The other discourse was one of Hashemite-Arab nationalism, one that saw Transjordan a part of the Arab nation that could only be realized with Hashemite rule and with the help of the British. The latter discourse did not remain uncontested. During the 1950s, political opposition movements moved from deploying a discourse of autochthony to a new discourse of Arab nationalism that questioned the legitimacy of Hashemite rule. In the aftermath of the annexation of the West Bank, the 1950s were a tumultuous period during which many different parties questioned Jordan’s legitimacy as a nation-state. Fathi claims that historians often described Jordan, after its annexation of the West Bank in 1948, as “not a nation in any recognizable sense, but a nominal state with two substantial bodies of population.”¹ They pointed at how the boundaries of the nation-state changed after the annexation of the West Bank, thus calling into question Jordan’s legitimacy. The main challenge for the Hashemite monarchy was to create a national identity that could be seen as legitimate by two different populations.

Bhabha complicates views that nation-states are either omnipotent apparatuses or the natural outcome of national-popular expressions and political will. These two types of readings leave no room for ambiguity. He writes:

---

The ‘locality’ of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as ‘other’ in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new ‘people’ in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation.²

Arguably, the Jordanian government embarked on a project to hybridize the notions of Transjordanianness and Palestinianness by incorporating Palestinians into its body politic and appropriating Palestinian spaces in Jerusalem as national Jordanian spaces. In essence, the Jordanian government did the opposite of historical nation building by trying to base a national identity on the liminal and the ambiguous, rather than on clear-cut boundaries. Bhabha’s concept of national culture means that national identities are more complex than the composition of the self and the other. In Bhabha’s opinion, “The ‘other’ is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between ourselves’.”³ In Jordan, the Palestinian ‘other’ is literally inside its borders and, during the period of annexation, so-called ‘others’ outnumbered so-called autochthonous Transjordanians.

There are several components of constructions of a national identity. According to Renan, the nation is supposed to supersede notions of race, religion, and language. The unifying factor that creates a nation out of composite populations is a set of discourses that are spiritual and sentimental. Renan argues discourses that make use of this spiritual principle draw on two things: “One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to

---

³ Ibid., 4.
perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.”

Furthermore, discourses of nationalism and national identity can obscure minority discourses. The latter, as Bhabha puts it, may contest “genealogies of ‘origin’ that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority” and disclose “the status of national culture – and the people – as a contentious, performative space.” Those who are in the position of narrative control can claim ‘cultural supremacy’ and narrate themselves into power. Moreover, Brand argues national narratives are performative and can never be complete. One way to claim narrative control is to invent traditions, which Hobsbawm defines as a “set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” The key part here is ‘continuity with the past’. The act of ritualistic traditions implies that these acts are a continuation of what people have done in the past. This helps create an idea of a national past and extends national history. Some groups have even invented history. Hobsbawm claims, “Plenty of political institutions, ideological movements and groups…were so unprecedented that even historic continuity had to be invented, for example by creating an ancient past beyond historical continuity.” In the case of Jordan, its colonial past and the Hashemites’ relatively recent arrival meant that the Hashemite monarchy needed to create or at least engage with Jordan’s pre-Hashemite past to be

---

6 Ibid., 301.
9 Ibid., 7.
viewed as legitimate, even natural, rulers of Jordan. In this chapter, I will explore how the Hashemites invented traditions of their protection of Jerusalem. Hashemite engagement of other aspects of history, including ancient history, will be analyzed in the fourth chapter.

The annexation of the West Bank necessitated shifts in the dominant official discourses of Jordanian national identity. After 1948, the Jordanian government sought to create a pan-Jordanian national identity that incorporated Palestinians into the Jordanian nation. According to the Hashemite government, ‘Palestinians’ were the residents in the West Bank and the refugees who arrived in the East Bank after the war. 1948 was the arbitrary cut-off date that delineated ‘Palestinians’ and Jordanians of Palestinian origin in Jordanian discourses. The Hashemites tried to use the discourses of Arab nationalism and Islamic Hashemite legitimacy to support its control of the West Bank but there is no evidence that many segments of the population embraced this pan-Jordanian identity. In fact, contrary to the Hashemites’ goals, the annexation of the West Bank did not facilitate the melding of Jordanians and Palestinians into one nation but strengthened discourses of separate national identities for Jordanians and Palestinians in the long term.

To examine how the Hashemite monarchy tried to create a discourse of national identity that was viewed as legitimate, the chapter will first address Jordan’s achievement of political independence in 1946 and the 1948 war with the new state of Israel. In the context of Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank, I will study the extent to which Palestinians were incorporated politically into the state. I will also chart the history of the political opposition movement, in the form of the Jordanian Nationalist Movement (JNM), during the 1950s. The JNM movement is significant to this study because
competing discourses of Arab nationalism emerged as ways to assert or contest the legitimacy of the Hashemite regime. The discursive incorporation of the West Bank will be examined by analyzing the Hashemite monarchy’s claims, framed by a discourse of Islamic legitimacy, to places such as the Temple Mount and Palestinian Archeological Museum in Jerusalem.

Independence and War, 1943 to 1953

During the 1940s, there was a tremendous outpouring of anti-British sentiment in Amman after the Arab Legion helped the British suppress a revolt in the mandate of Iraq. Many Jordanians felt that the Legion betrayed a fellow Arab state. Although most Jordanian officers in the Arab Legion remained loyal to the Anglo-Hashemite state, one of the Bani Sakhr sheikhs called on all men to resign from the Legion. Cities such as Amman and Salt were in chaos due to demonstrations. During World War Two, Transjordan had officially allied with the British but, according to acclaimed writer Abd al-Rahman Munif’s memoirs, many Jordanians were pro-German, as were residents in many other British mandates and colonies. Munif attributes Germany’s popularity to discontent with British policies in Palestine and antagonism towards colonialism. After the coup in Iraq, security tightened throughout Amman and most travellers to Iraq were arrested. According to Munif, “Amman during that period was like a cauldron on the boil. There were many reasons for anger and resentment…When some British officers arrived to take up residence and rented houses…they faced a great deal of harassment.”

---

11 Munif, 95.
People hardly noticed the parade of Allied troops in Amman that signaled the end of World War Two. After the war, the British Empire soon disintegrated. In early 1946, the British government announced that Transjordan had reached a stage of development that merited complete independence. In contrast to the Allied victory parade, Independence Day in Amman was an extravagant affair with fireworks and parades on the streets. Delegates from other Arab states also traveled to Amman to congratulate Transjordan on its independence.

Abdullah was aware of anti-British sentiment but he also knew that Transjordan was militarily and financially dependent on Britain. According to Wilson, Abdullah was nervous about other Arab leaders’ visions of Arab nationalism and Arab unity. He wanted to counter these discourses by creating his own reality of a unified Arab state under his rule. Before independence, he sought unity with Syria to strengthen the state of Transjordan but he had few Syrian supporters left, perhaps in part due to Abdullah’s negotiations with Zionist leaders from the late 1930s onwards were well known. Transjordan’s weakness was one of the factors that led Abdullah to seriously consider the annexation of Palestine. Therefore, he began cultivating support among notable Palestinian families, chief among them the Al-Nashashibi family, which had also

---

12 Munif, 239.
13 Ibid., 241.
14 Wilson, 135-140. After World War Two, the Arab world was mired in the ‘struggle for Syria’ after Syrian political independence and Abdullah began his campaign to sit on the throne in Damascus again. Although Abdullah had some supporters, such as monarchists and dissidents who were dissatisfied with the urban notables in Damascus, the leaders of the Syrian National Party were difficult to beat and they had no interest in giving up their power in favor of the Hashemite monarchy. Abdullah’s reputation was further undermined by the belief that he would replace French rule with British rule (Wilson, 157-159). Furthermore, Landis argues that, for Syria, the real danger of Abdullah’s negotiations with Zionist leaders was not a war with the Zionists but Hashemite hegemony in the region (176). According to Landis, Syrian President Quwwatli’s fear of Hashemite domination stems from his own lack of control of the Syrian Parliament and the Syrian military (178).
negotiated with the Jewish Agency.\textsuperscript{15} Abdullah was also interested in annexing Palestine due to its natural and human resources. Furthermore, Jerusalem had tourism potential and symbolic value.\textsuperscript{16} In 1946, Abdullah and the Jewish Agency agreed on the partition of Palestine.\textsuperscript{17} Transjordan was the only Arab state that supported the partition of Palestine and, in Wilson’s words, Abdullah became a “political leper”\textsuperscript{18} in the eyes of the Arab states and also for some Transjordanians. In the lead-up to the war in 1948, Abdullah began negotiations with the British government to allow Transjordanian forces to occupy the area designated for the Arabs once the British army withdrew.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1947, the United Nations announced the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, intensifying bombs, battles, and skirmishes between Jewish and Arab-Palestinian militias. According to Khalidi, Zionist forces’ superiority in arms was already evident.\textsuperscript{20} On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion announced Israel’s statehood and the Arab states entered the war. The Arab forces eventually lost the war, partly due to the rivalries among the Arab states. According to Gerges, the government in Egypt actually did not want to enter the war,\textsuperscript{21} but strong anti-Zionist, Arab nationalist feeling among the Egyptian people pushed the government to intervene. Furthermore, King Faruq in Egypt wanted to contain Abdullah’s territorial ambitions and legitimize himself as the leader of

\bibliography{\textsuperscript{15} Wilson, 109; Arthur Day, \textit{East Bank/West Bank} (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986), 19; Kimberly Katz, \textit{Jordanian Jerusalem} (Gainesville, FL: Florida University Press, 2005), 30.\textsuperscript{16} Day, 19.\textsuperscript{17} Eugene Rogan, “Jordan and 1948,” in \textit{The War for Palestine}, ed. Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109.\textsuperscript{18} Wilson, 123.\textsuperscript{19} Day, 19.\textsuperscript{20} Rashid Khalidi, “The Palestinians and 1948,” in \textit{The War for Palestine}, ed. Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 13. Khalidi also claims that the nature of British mandate rule prevented Palestinians from forming state institutions or accessing state authority. Palestinian elites were divided, with one faction led by the mufti Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the other led by Raghib al-Nashashibi (Khalidi, 17-23).\textsuperscript{21} Egypt was in the process of revising its treaty with Britain and wanted to appease the British government.
the Arab world. Eventually, Egypt sent only a fraction of its army to Palestine.\textsuperscript{22} During the war, these rivalries and interests hampered the war effort, one example being Egypt confiscating an arms shipment from the Suez Canal to Transjordan.\textsuperscript{23} Alliances disintegrated as each Arab state undermined the very notion of Arab nationalism by prioritizing its own state interests. The Jordanian Arab Legion managed to take control of the Old City of Jerusalem but, in order to keep control of Jerusalem and perhaps to honor the deal with the Jewish Agency, the Legion withdrew from the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramla. This retreat left the Palestinians in these towns unprotected and forced them to leave their homes and move to Jordan. It also caused mass protests in Amman itself. Some protesters even gathered outside Abdullah’s palace in Amman until Abdullah approached them and slapped one of the protesters, telling them to join and fight Israel themselves if they protested his actions. According to Kirkbride’s memoirs, during this incident, Abdullah succeeded in placating the protesters and afterwards, the only shouts that could be heard were “Live the King!”\textsuperscript{24}

According to Katz, Abdullah’s reputation improved briefly after saving Jerusalem, an act that, in the eyes of some, legitimized Transjordan’s control of Palestine. Katz argues that saving Jerusalem still carries meaning for Jordanians today.\textsuperscript{25} But after Transjordan’s occupation of Palestinian territories, the Arab League considered expelling Transjordan. Egypt had also created an All-Palestine Government in Gaza. In response, Abdullah created a Palestinian National Congress that consisted of his Palestinian supporters such as the Nashabishi family, to counter the All-Palestine Government in


\textsuperscript{23} Rogan, “Jordan and 1948,” 112.

\textsuperscript{24} Alec Kirkbride, A Crackle of Thorns (London: John Murray, 1956), 31.

\textsuperscript{25} Katz, 49.
In 1950, the Congress voted in favor of the union of the West Bank and East Bank and this vote passed a popular referendum. Abdullah banned the use of the word ‘Palestine’ and the former Palestinian territories now annexed by Jordan became known as the ‘West Bank’.

Only one year later, Abdullah was assassinated outside Al-Aqsa Mosque at the Temple Mount. Abdullah had made it a habit to lead prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of the most important holy places in Islam, every Friday. Although Abdullah spatially performed his legitimacy as a Hashemite, some Palestinians, and some Jordanians, clearly thought he was an illegitimate ruler. The assassin was a Palestinian youth but Abdullah El-Tell, a former officer in the Arab Legion who then lived in exile in Egypt, allegedly concocted the plot at the behest of the Egyptian government. Abdullah’s bodyguards killed the assassin immediately. In the East Bank, most Palestinians mourned in public, but in the refugee camps there was some rejoicing. In retaliation for the assassination, cars with Palestinian license plates were stoned in Salt and some Jordanians attacked a refugee camp in Amman, leaving three refugees dead and more wounded. As Munif wrote, from 1948 onwards, “Amman was full of wounds and bitterness.” After a brief reign by Abdullah’s son Talal, Abdullah’s young grandson Hussein ascended the throne at age eighteen in 1953.

---

26 Fathi, 116; Day, 21.
27 Transjordan changed its name to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1949 with Abdullah as King.
28 Katz, 67.
29 Wilson, 209.
30 Munif, 281.
31 Talal reigned for one year and eventually abdicated due to illness, reportedly schizophrenia. He is also remembered for the establishment of a relatively liberal constitution in 1952.
‘Two Banks, One Family’

As a result of the 1948 war, almost 360,000 refugees flooded the territory that would become the West Bank and 110,000 refugees entered the East Bank. Jordan’s population increased from 375,000 people to over one million. In 1952, Palestinians made up approximately 65% of the total population of Jordan (consisting of both the East Bank and the West Bank). Such a drastic change in population meant that Jordan needed to reimagine itself as community, i.e. construct a new national identity. According to Maffi, the Palestinian majority was both a hindrance to the development of a strong national identity and an opportunity for the Hashemite state to create a national identity separate from Transjordanian and Palestinian identities: a pan-Jordanian identity that included both Palestinians and Transjordanians. During a speech at the parliamentary session that voted for the unity of the two banks of the Jordan River, Abdullah likened Jordan to “a bird whose wings are its East and its West.” This articulation made the annexation seem inevitable and even a natural step towards a single, unified Arab state. A pro-Hashemite conference declared that the unification of Transjordan and Palestine was a “prelude to real Arab unity.”

However, Maffi argues that the Hashemite government’s discourse of pan-Jordanianism was challenged by the strength of the Palestinian national identity and the Transjordanian political opposition movement that had emerged during the 1920s, as outlined in the previous chapter. Few people accepted the discourse of pan-Jordanian

---

34 Abdullah, “Khitab al-‘Arsh.” Quoted in Massad, 224.
35 Massad, 228.
identity propagated by the Hashemite monarchy;\textsuperscript{36} in fact, annexation seemed to strengthen notions of separate Jordanian and Palestinian national identities. This divide crystallized after the civil war and a sequence of events known as Black September in 1970.\textsuperscript{37} The differences between Jordanians and Palestinians were largely socioeconomic but after the war, a Jordanian national identity, nascent during annexation due to competing discourses about Arab nationalism, became more fully formed. Kassay claims that the civil war was the cause of the Jordanian-Palestinian divide, not the result of one.\textsuperscript{38} According to Khalidi, Palestinian failures, such as the loss of Palestine during the 1948 war, the subsequent Jordanian annexation of a large part of Palestinian territory, and Black September, strengthened Palestinian national identity. These losses gave Palestinians a universal experience of loss that cut across national lines and class divisions.\textsuperscript{39}

The discourse of pan-Jordanianism emerged in the 1950s, when Arab nationalism was becoming a more popular ideology due to the rise of Nasser. The discourse of pan-Jordanianism was based on Arab unity and the regime may have hoped that it could concurrently express a Jordanian nationalism that was not opposed to Arab nationalism. Jordan is known for being the only Arab state that has granted Palestinian refugees


\textsuperscript{37} Since its establishment in 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has been at odds with the Jordanian government due to the PLO militias’ incursions from Jordanian territory into Israeli territory and Israeli attacks on PLO militants residing with Jordanians. The PLO arguably began acting like a ‘state within a state’. In 1970, Palestinian militias tried to assassinate King Hussein and hijacked several airplanes. In response, Hussein declared martial law and the Jordanian army attacked Palestinian militias, ultimately expelling these groups from Jordan. It is reported that between 1,000 and 2,000 people were killed in the conflict.


citizenship, which was the formal political basis for unity.\textsuperscript{40} However, it seems that Palestinians experienced only limited incorporation into the state structures and remained ‘the other’. Even today, Palestinians in the East Bank define themselves as ‘Palestinian-Jordanian’, a hyphenated identity that suggests that ‘Jordanian’ is a term reserved for those who lived in the East Bank before 1948 and that, in and of itself, could not include both Jordanians and Palestinians. Massad argues that the Hashemite state embarked on an intentional policy of Jordanization and de-Palestinization and that Transjordanian nationalism defined the newly expanded nation-state.\textsuperscript{41} However, Brand disagrees and suggests “the state’s goal was less to impose a Transjordanian identity than to create a hybrid identity for both communities.”\textsuperscript{42} Whether the state ‘Jordanized’ the West Bank and if so, how will be examined below.\textsuperscript{43}

\textit{Political Incorporation Into The State}

The Jordanian government began to assert its control in the West Bank by dissolving many of the political organizations that had been founded in Palestine before 1948.\textsuperscript{44} In 1949, the Jordanian government changed the electoral law to allow Palestinians to vote in the 1950 parliamentary election. The government decreed that twenty representatives would be elected from the West Bank, which was the same number of seats as the East Bank despite the West Bank’s larger population. Furthermore, the Jordanian government interfered in the elections to ensure that candidates loyal to the government were elected. John Glubb allegedly provided his

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{40} Brand, “Palestinians and Jordanians,” 47.
\item\textsuperscript{41} Massad, 226.
\item\textsuperscript{42} Brand, “Palestinians and Jordanians,” 50.
\item\textsuperscript{43} Despite the state changing its name from Transjordan to Jordan, in the contexts of post-1948, I will use the term ‘Transjordanians’ to refer to inhabitants of Jordan who had lived there before 1948. These inhabitants are also sometimes referred to as ‘East Bankers’, a term which does not include Palestinians who settled down in the East Bank after 1948.
\item\textsuperscript{44} Betty Anderson, \textit{Nationalist Voices in Jordan} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 130.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
soldiers with lists of candidates that had special marks next to government candidates. Therefore, electoral laws, which already favored the nomadic and rural areas that are traditionally seen as strongholds of Hashemite support, increasingly favored rural areas through gerrymandering. Heavily Palestinian urban areas were and are still underrepresented. These electoral laws have not been reformed and are under increasing attack, with calls for electoral reform being one of the main issues for protesters today.

According to Anderson, during the annexation, the limited number of government posts that Palestinians obtained carried little power and Palestinians only held positions that were pertinent to Palestinian, rather than national, issues. One of these positions was ‘Custodian of the Holy Places’, which carried the title of minister. Abdullah created this position to codify Jordan’s authority over Jerusalem’s holy places and appointed Raghib al-Nashashibi, a member of Palestine’s bourgeoisie and one of Abdullah’s early supporters. However, al-Nashashibi apparently viewed this position as a demotion from his previous post, and according to al-Nashashibi’s nephew, Raghib al-Nashashibi thought he had been “reduced to a loyal personality, a player on the periphery – a Jordanian administrator in a dusty corner of Jerusalem.”

---

45 Massad, 231.
47 Fathi, 206.
48 Anderson, 130.
long after his appointment and by 1953 the position no longer existed and the governor of Jerusalem had taken over the custodianship of holy places.\textsuperscript{50}

In the East Bank, the government made efforts to incorporate Palestinians into the state bureaucracies and the military. Before the annexation of the West Bank, the Arab Legion’s soldiers were recruited mostly from southern Jordanian tribes,\textsuperscript{51} as part of Glubb’s policy to co-opt the Bedouin population. Glubb created the National Guard in 1950 to prevent the Palestinians from becoming ‘half-citizens’ and to encourage them to fully embrace a militarized Jordanian identity. The National Guard recruited from rural West Bank villages and after 1950, Palestinians began to enlist in. However, much of the Jordanian government feared arming Palestinians and the National Guard was severely underequipped and their duties were limited to border control. After the dismissal of Glubb and the Arabization of the Arab Legion in 1956,\textsuperscript{52} the National Guard was integrated into the army as an attempt to desegregate men from the East Bank and the West Bank.\textsuperscript{53} By the late 1960s, Palestinians made up 40-45\% of the military and many of them, being more educated than their Jordanian counterparts, were recruited for their technical skills.\textsuperscript{54} But officers remained Transjordanian and after Black September the military was drastically ‘Jordanized’ and recruitment of Palestinians decreased significantly.

As for government ministries, Palestinian families loyal to Abdullah were rewarded with posts and appointed to the upper house of Parliament. Since systems of

\textsuperscript{50} Katz, 79-80.
\textsuperscript{51} Fathi, 140.
\textsuperscript{52} The Arabization of the Arab Legion refers to the dismissal of British officers and replacing them with Jordanians. The Arab Legion also changed its name to the Jordanian Army.
\textsuperscript{53} Massad, 177; Ibid., 187; Ibid., 204-205.
\textsuperscript{54} Fathi, 140.
familial networks were already the basis of political appointments and urban educated
Palestinians were absorbed into urban social structures in East Bank cities, as Droz-
Vincent argues,\(^55\) Palestinians were able to help other family members and friends obtain
government positions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs became heavily Palestinian and
the majority of Jordan’s ambassadors actually hailed from Palestinian families loyal to
the Hashemite monarchy.\(^56\) At the same time, the ministers of the Interior, Information,
and Defense, which deal with “sensitive” information, were usually of East Bank origin
with an “impeccable background,”\(^57\) meaning a family history of loyalty to the monarchy.
From 1952 to 1992, Jordan has had twenty-three prime ministers and five of them are
considered Palestinian (this definition of ‘Palestinian’ does not include families such as
the Rifais, who are of Palestinian origin but since they moved to the East Bank before
1948, they are considered to be entrenched in the East Bank). Fathi argues that these five
prime ministers all had extremely short terms of one year or less and were all appointed
during times when King Hussein needed to show that the Jordanian government could
represent Palestinians.\(^58\)

Since its establishment in Transjordan, the Hashemite monarchy has continually
relied on individuals and families who have demonstrated loyalty to the king. The
patronage system, first established to gain the loyalty of tribes, Christians, and
Circassians, meant that different segments of the population relied on accessibility to the
king. As Fathi sums up, “The Jordanian policy-making apparatus revolves around
individuals more than institutions. It functions as a strategic interest group, consisting of

\(^{56}\) Day, 22. Upper-class, urban Palestinians may have had more experience with foreign powers.
\(^{57}\) Fathi, 149.
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 147-148.
people who are bound together by their interest and stake in maintaining the system.”

This system of patronage was also difficult for ‘outsiders’ to penetrate and thus, even before the Jordanian government embarked on an intended policy of ‘de-Palestinization’ in the aftermath of the 1970 civil war, the majority of the Palestinian population established themselves in the private sector. Furthermore, as Transjordanians’ level of education increased due to the expansion of education in the 1950s, the government was no longer as dependent on Palestinians for their technical and organizational skills. As stated before, in 1948, the majority of the Palestinian population was more urban, educated, more politically aware, and more exposed to mass media than the Transjordanian population. According to Massad, these differences led to tension as the Transjordanian urban population thought that upper- and middle-class Palestinians were “engaging in a nation-class narrative of superiority over Transjordanians.”

Massad demonstrates that class dynamics underlie the formation of discourses of Transjordanian and Palestinian identities. This class tension was exacerbated in the 1970s by oil remittances. After 1948, many Palestinian refugees, including those who became Jordanian citizens, migrated to the emerging Gulf states in order to work on newly discovered oil fields. According to Brand, Palestinians’ remittances began to flow back to Jordan during the oil boom in the 1970s, funding a construction boom in Amman, and Palestinians and Jordanians saw an obvious disparity in wealth between their two communities. Along with the de-Palestinization policies and increased discrimination towards Palestinians after Black September, Palestinian and Jordanian identities were

59 Fathi, 149.
60 Massad, 234.
increasingly delineated and the public-private sector divide intersected with intercommunal divides.\footnote{Brand, “Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity,” 53.}

**Jordanian and Palestinian Subjectivities**

The different employment opportunities available to Palestinians and Jordanians may have also influenced conceptualizations of subjectivity and Jordanian identity. Brand argues that aside from tribal identities, an essential component of Transjordanian subjectivity is government employment, especially in security services or the military. Due to the Anglo-Hashemite government’s cooptation of tribal sheikhs, Bedouins, and even political dissidents into state bureaucracies, it seems that nation and state, in the form of the Hashemite government, are strongly intertwined.\footnote{Ibid., 48.} The Jordanian government also reinforces the strong relationship between the nation and the military with customs such as Army Day and parades. The government built the Martyrs’ Memorial as a dedication to the Arab Army and the Jordanian army and it also functions as a museum showcasing Hashemite history. The memorial will be analyzed further in the fourth chapter. In contrast, prominent members of Jerusalem families actively discouraged their children from joining the Jordanian bureaucracy.\footnote{Meron Benvenisti, *Jerusalem: The Torn City* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 49.} Thus, the tie between nation and state is not as strong for the majority of Palestinians. According to Brand, the contemporary Palestinian population in Jordan can be divided into several groups. Low-income Palestinian refugees who live in camps tend to be the most attached to their home village, town, or city since they are the least integrated into the Jordanian economic and social

---

62 Ibid., 48.
Refugee camps are known as “strongholds of [Palestinian] nationalism,” as demonstrated by the celebrations that occurred in the camps after Abdullah’s assassination. Conversely, the majority of the Palestinian bourgeoisie in Jordan consists of West Bank families such as the al-Nashashibi family who supported Abdullah before annexation. The Hashemites have rewarded these families and they are a “pillar of regime support.” Brand claims that these Palestinians “tend to see no dilemma or contradiction in identifying themselves as both Palestinian and Jordanian”, and were probably among the few who participated in the discourse of pan-Jordanianism. Brand also argues that middle-class Palestinians who were economically and socially privileged were “more comfortable expressing some form of attachment to Jordan (if not identifying themselves as Jordanian), or at the very least expressing loyalty to the king.”

Many second-generation Palestinians, especially those who are born to marriages between Palestinians and Jordanians, have a much stronger sense of Jordanianness and also a stronger affinity with the city of Amman. Brand calls it an ‘Amman is Jordan’ identity, since so many Palestinians live in Amman. Interestingly, other scholars claim that Amman has been excluded from discourses of Jordanian national identity, and I will explore the role of Amman and particular public spaces in the city in narratives of national history further in the fourth chapter.

64 Day, 65.
66 Ibid., 49.
67 Ibid., 49.
68 Ibid., 50.
69 Such scholars include Myriam Ababsa and Ali Kassay.
The Jordanian National Movement (JNM) and Discourses of Pan-Arabism, 1950-1957

The Hashemite monarchy was not only challenged by discourses of separate Jordanian and Palestinian identities but also by the Jordanian National Movement (JNM), which questioned the legitimacy of the monarchy’s discourse of Arab nationalism. The JNM was the primary political opposition movement during the 1950s. The movement was an umbrella organization, using the discourse of Arab nationalism to frame opposition activities of activists ranging from Palestinians to Communists. Students, who were increasingly politicized after studying abroad in other Arab states or studying under Arab nationalist teachers within Jordan itself, made up the largest group of protesters and urban professionals were also involved.70 The 1950s were extremely tumultuous and politically fraught and, according to Anderson’s interlocutors, “Everybody belonged to a party in the 1950s.”71 This was the golden age of pan-Arabism, with the ascendance of Gamal Abdul Nasser, the charismatic and polarizing military strongman of Egypt, the nationalization of the Suez Canal, and the short-lived union of Syria and Egypt, which seemed at first to be a realization of the dream of Arab unity. Due to Nasser’s influence, Egypt led the anti-imperialist, socialist vision of Arab nationalism, in contrast with the Jordanian Hashemite monarchy’s staunch pro-Western policies. Jordan’s nascent political opposition movement that had emerged before World War Two had already framed their demands in terms of Arab nationalism. According to Anderson, after the unification of the two banks in 1950, the Jordanian opposition movement merged with the Palestinian nationalist movement, due to their common vocabulary of Arab nationalism.72 This

70 Anderson, 118-119.
71 Ibid., 117.
72 Ibid., 117-118.
discourse framed their political demands and was used to undermine Hashemite legitimacy.

The JNM’s popularity can be partly attributed to economic issues. The British-designed land program had not only removed land from the sheikhs’ control, as mentioned in the first chapter, but the division of collectively-owned land, along with the increase in population, also led to decreased plot sizes. For example, the population of ‘Ajluni villages increased from approximately 3,000 to approximately 5,000 from 1934 to 1954 but they controlled the same amount of territory. During the 1940s, more landowners were in debt and they began mortgaging on their land. This led to increased urbanization, as many land tenants moved to the cities for work opportunities. Urbanization exacerbated problems of unemployment, estimated to be approximately 16.5% in 1955. Palestinian refugees were disproportionately affected and in 1954, only 10% of refugees held full-time jobs. As a result, the divide between socioeconomic classes widened. Only a small segment of the population benefited from the regime; the others, especially Palestinians who were mostly excluded from the jobs available within the government, were ready to fight its policies. According to Hacker’s survey conducted in 1958, most residents in Jordan lived at or below subsistence level and nine out of ten residents in Amman were dissatisfied with their situation of poverty. Therefore, protests during the 1950s were not just about a significant event in another Arab state or Israel. They were also responses to inflation, food prices, and unemployment. According to a report about Sulayman al-Nabulsi, the leader of JNM and

---

73 Anderson, 122.
75 Anderson, 122-123.
prime minister in 1956, bread prices were always involved in protesters’ calls for Arab unity.  

Dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic situation in Jordan was framed with a discourse of Arab nationalism that was anti-imperialist and thus, anti-Hashemite. Many of those involved were avid followers of Sawt al-‘Arab (Voice of the Arabs), the popular radio station broadcast from Cairo. This radio station’s censure of Iraq and Jordan was Nasser’s main propaganda tool against the Hashemite regimes. This propaganda reinforced the JNM’s criticism of the Hashemite monarchy. Anti-imperialist sentiment was fueled by reports about British cooperation with Israel. According to Anderson, demonstrators used anti-American and anti-British slogans to urge the government to fight against Israel. Anti-imperialism also took the form of targeting John Glubb, the commander of the Arab Legion. Glubb and other British officers had already been targets of harassment and distrust before 1948. Abd al-Rahman Munif’s grandmother claimed, “Could anyone believe that Abu Hneik (Glubb Pasha) wants to help the Muslims?” This intensified after 1948 as Glubb was accused of betraying the Arab and Palestinian cause when he ordered the Arab Legion to retreat from Lydda and Ramla. Glubb was a sign that the British still had control over Jordan. According to Anderson, “The solution to this colonial interference was the unification of the Arab states as an alternative to Jordan’s separate existence as a state.” Therefore, the vision of dissolving imperially created borders and establishing one single Arab state was a threat to the Hashemite regime in Jordan. It is unclear whether political opposition parties truly wanted to overthrow the

---

77 Anderson, 125.
78 Ibid., 130.
79 Ibid., 133.
80 Munif, 241.
81 Anderson, 133.
Hashemite monarchy. Anderson claims that political opposition parties never discussed overthrowing the king in public and some even claimed to support the monarchy. But in private, political opposition leaders certainly discussed the end of the monarchy and several individuals argued that if the opposition parties had been able to overthrow the king, they certainly would have done so. Furthermore, such calls were made in 1966, after the Jordanian army confronted Palestinian guerrillas raiding Israeli territory. Jordanian military officers of Palestinian origin distributed pamphlets urging the end of the monarchy and establishing a republic in both banks called Palestine. It is interesting to note that these officers maintained the unity of the two banks and thus seemed to have bought into Abdullah’s discourse of the two banks being a natural entity.

However, either way, few were strongly pro-Hashemite. In December 1955, after years of poverty, unemployment and discontent, combined with Sawt al-‘Arab broadcasts and rumors that Palestine would be lost due to the Baghdad Pact, the country erupted. Anderson calls these protests “the most violent demonstrations the country had ever seen.” The protesters had established networks and were organized, able to appeal to large segments of the population. Protesters called out the name of Sulayman al-Nabulsi as a potential leader for the country. These protests also occurred in the largely Jordanian towns of Madaba, Karak, Salt, and Ma’an. These protests were expressions of all Jordanians’ dissatisfaction, not just Palestinians. In 1956, the government announced that Jordan would not join the Baghdad Pact, marking one of the few times that protests on

---

82 Anderson, 133-134.
83 Massad, 204.
84 The Baghdad Pact was founded in 1955 by the U.S. and Britain as a defensive organization against Soviet influence in the Middle East. However, in the context of radical pan-Arab socialism, this pact was commonly viewed as another means of Western imperialist control in the Middle East and thus was extremely unpopular.
85 Anderson, 162.
the street actually impacted Jordan’s policy direction. On March 1, 1956, King Hussein announced that General John Glubb had been dismissed from the Arab Legion. The government initiated a three-day national holiday and, according to Anderson, people chanted pro-Hussein slogans for the first time in years and residents in the West Bank warmly welcomed the king for the first time. As the author Munif summarizes in his memoirs, “People’s joy at [Glubb’s] expulsion tells the story of Amman during a certain period.” In this case, the story of Amman is one of genuine anger and discontent directed towards the vestiges of colonial rule and even the Hashemite monarchy.

In 1956, the JNM dominated the elections and Sulayman al-Nabulsi was appointed Prime Minister. But it soon became clear that King Hussein and al-Nabulsi could not work together due to competing visions of the future of Jordan. According to Anderson, the JNM envisioned a future without the monarchy, or at least a very limited political role for the monarchy. Conversely, King Hussein wanted to rule the country himself, with the Parliament being a scapegoat for unpopular policies. Furthermore, al-Nabulsi favored a strong relationship with the Soviet Union; meanwhile, Hussein was in contact with the United States. The situation came to a head in April 1957, when al-Nabulsi announced that he officially intended to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Hussein forced al-Nabulsi to resign and, approximately one week later, the ‘Free Officers’ allegedly started a coup but the coup did not succeed because Bedouin soldiers refused to comply with the plot against the monarchy. Some politicians from the era claim that this coup was actually orchestrated by the king and the ‘King’s men’ as an

---

86 Anderson, 165.
87 Ibid., 168.
88 Munif, 96.
89 Anderson, 177.
90 The ‘Free Officers’ was a group of pro-Nasser Arab nationalist officers in the Jordanian Army.
excuse to destroy the JNM. After the attempted coup, the monarchy established martial law, enforced censorship, and banned political parties. Demonstrations broke out in the West Bank and Amman; in Jerusalem, protesters swarmed al-Haram al-Sharif every day.\footnote{Anderson, 185.} The JNM subsequently collapsed.

But other segments of the population maintained their loyalty to the king throughout the 1950s due to the patronage system by which the monarchy provided services in exchange for loyalty and compliance. Such groups included the majority of Bedouins, urban merchants, and peasants. After the coup, 200 sheikhs pledged allegiance to the king. Al-Nabulsi’s government did not appease the Bedouin population, which formed the bedrock of the military, and decreased their access to the state apparatus. As a result, many Bedouins thought it was in their interest to support Hussein during the coup and welcomed his return to full power.\footnote{Ibid., 188-189.}

After the JNM collapsed, King Hussein made a speech about the nationalists being false Arab nationalists. He stated:

\begin{quote}
I gave them power and granted them full confidence, and made myself their hand in government. But they used foul play and exceeded their power, and they claimed credit and pretended to be nationalists, disregarding the great evils which the enemy and the imperialists are reserving for us to engulf the rest of the usurped homeland and disperse the remaining hundreds and thousands of its people.\footnote{Hussein, \textit{Summary of World Broadcasts}, April 26, 1957. Quoted in Anderson, 187.} \\
\end{quote}

In this speech, Hussein repositioned himself as the true Arab nationalist and publicly distanced himself from the so-called imperialists, despite having received $10 million in aid from the United States immediately after the coup.\footnote{Anderson, 186.} It was perhaps after the coup that King Hussein began taking the idea of a pan-Jordanian identity seriously and embarked
on spatial claims to Jerusalem in the name of Arab nationalism and Islamic legitimacy. Day argues that some ‘homogenization’ did take place during the period of Jordan’s annexation. According to Day, “The government made every effort to incorporate the Palestinians into the society and, to the extent that distinctions between the two groups remained, to balance the interests of both.” During the 1960s, the Jordanian government tried to broaden its base of support by recruiting more Palestinians into the bureaucracy, appointing more nationalists to the government, and expanding cultural inculcation of national values through education and museums. These efforts signal the emergence of a Hashemite discourse of a pan-Jordanian national identity that purportedly could include both Jordanians and Palestinians. Rather than assimilating Palestinian cultural values into Jordanian ones, the Jordanian government attempted to make Palestinian culture and Palestinian spaces more Jordanian. This discourse was perhaps most explicitly expressed in the form of the ‘Jordanization’ of public spaces in Jerusalem.

Discourses of Legitimacy in Jerusalem

The phenomenon of ‘Jordanization’ in Jerusalem refers to the process by which the Hashemite monarchy attempted to take control of and appropriate Jerusalem’s holy places as Jordanian national spaces. During the period of Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank, the Hashemite monarchy used the vocabulary of Islamic legitimacy and the Hashemites’ descent from the Prophet Muhammad to frame its role as the rightful protector of the holy places in Jerusalem. Similarly to the Ottomans, the Hashemites restricted land purchases near holy places, used pictorial narratives, and emphasized their roles as protectors of the holy places as social and political legitimation and to assert

\footnote{Day, 60.}
control. King Hussein frequently referred to Jerusalem as the spiritual capital and rarely called it the second capital of the kingdom. In an interview with an American journalist, Hussein stated, “Jerusalem is the spiritual capital of our country; it is the cradle of our heritage and our glory.” However, Jerusalem was also the focal point of constructions of a separate Palestinian national identity. According to Khalidi, unlike Transjordanians, Palestinians had a sense of their borders even before the mandate period due to Palestine’s recognized status as holy land. Before the mandate was established, these borders signified not national space but sacred space. Jerusalem was central to Palestinians’ belief in their land as sacred and it was the focal point in discourses of Palestinian national identity.

Despite Hussein’s proclamations of Jerusalem’s significance, Katz argues that many Palestinians were offended by Jerusalem’s second-class status in Jordan. According to Katz, many Palestinians felt that Jerusalem was ignored in favor of Amman. Furthermore, some Palestinians felt that the Jordanian government only appreciated Jerusalem as a religious and tourist center. In their view, the Jordanian government ignored and downright discouraged, as indicated by the government’s dissolution of political parties in Jerusalem, Jerusalem’s historical role as the political, economic, and administrative center of Palestine. In some ways, this was true. Massad argues that the Jordanian government devoted most of its development expenditure to the East Bank. Some claim that, since the West Bank was more economically developed, the Jordanian government’s policy was to encourage investment and development in the East Bank and

---

96 Katz, 9.
98 Khalidi, Palestinian Identity, 29-30.
99 Katz, 81; Anderson, 131.
weaken the economy of the West Bank. Only tourism flourished in the West Bank. Thus, many Palestinians migrated to the East Bank, especially to Amman, to find work and Amman flourished at the expense of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{100} As more Palestinians moved from Jerusalem to Amman for work, tensions eventually eased. But according to Benvenisti, the sense of discrimination and injustice did not disappear; rather, these feelings were no longer expressed politically.\textsuperscript{101} Aid stamps, which will be discussed in more detail below, were initially sold in Jordan before 1948 to raise funds for Palestinians. But in May 1951, the Parliament decided that revenue from the sale of aid stamps would not go towards the Palestinian aid fund but would be used for development and construction work for the entire kingdom.\textsuperscript{102} Furthermore, the government did not create any public housing projects and carried out few development projects in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{103} In 1954, Palestinians representatives in Parliament suggested making Jerusalem the capital of Jordan. In response, the Jordanian government said that such a move would require the agreement of the other Arab states. By allowing such a debate, the Jordanian government attempted to placate the Palestinian population by suggesting that Jerusalem was worthy of consideration as the capital of Jordan. This move was also an attempt for the Hashemites to gain legitimacy as an Arab state in the context of pan-Arabism by suggesting that Jerusalem belonged to all Arab states.\textsuperscript{104} However, as Katz points out, the government had no real intention of moving the capital to Jerusalem in fear of ‘Palestinization’ of Jordan and instability for Hashemite rule, as well as criticism from the international

\textsuperscript{100} Massad, 235-236.
\textsuperscript{101} Benvenisti, 28.
\textsuperscript{102} Katz, 57.
\textsuperscript{104} Katz, 87.
community, which still favored internationalization of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{105} Furthermore, Sa’id al-Tall, former minister of education in Jordan, stated that the Jordanian government attempted to erase Palestine and Palestinian identity through cultural appropriation of Jerusalem. According to al-Tall, this was a mistake as Jerusalem became one of the main bases of political opposition during the period of Jordan’s annexation.\textsuperscript{106} Therefore, the Hashemite government’s attempt to take control over Jerusalem and create a pan-Jordanian identity that would include Palestinians only strengthened discourses of a separate Palestinian national identity.

\textit{Administration of Jerusalem, 1951-1961}

One of the ways by which the Hashemite government attempted to assert its dominance in Jerusalem was in the realm of education. This occurred in the context of the expansion of education during the 1950s. The Ministry of Education began publishing history textbooks and, between 1951 and 1961, school enrolment increased by 113\%.\textsuperscript{107} History textbooks usually serve as narratives of national pasts. A textbook from 1959 quotes King Hussein’s speech about the Jordanian and Arab struggle in defense of unity, freedom, strength and “the message of protecting our sacred things and our sacred land, and the message of protecting the land of the Arabs for the unity of the Arabs.”\textsuperscript{108} In these textbooks, Jordan’s history was Hashemite history and inextricably linked with Arab nationalism. Rather than being a colonial creation, Jordan was presented as a natural outcome of Hashemite-Arab nationalism.\textsuperscript{109} The 1964 Law of Education states that the goal of the education system was for the “child to develop into a good citizen

\begin{flushright}
\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{105} Katz, 82.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{107} Anderson, 70; Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 3.
\end{footnotesize}
\end{flushright}
who believes in: God, Country and King.”  

One such example of a tradition to legitimize authority and to inculcate beliefs is Abd al-Rahman Munif’s account of singing ‘Long Live the Amir’ every morning at school in Amman during the 1940s. These traditions were part of a body of practices to teach children loyalty to and belief in the Hashemite national narrative. This practice supports Hobsbawm’s argument that traditions are created to establish or symbolize social cohesion, establish or legitimize institutions and relations of authority, and to inculcate beliefs and behaviors.

In Jerusalem, where there were more missionary schools than in the East Bank, the Jordanian government targeted Christian schools. The 1955 education law aimed to restrict the influence of these Christian institutions by requiring schools to use textbooks and teaching methods approved by the Jordanian Ministry of Education. The law also limited the language of instruction to Arabic and required schools to follow national and Muslim holidays. Furthermore, students were limited to studying only their own religion. The Jordanian government’s restrictions on Christian missionary schools occurred in the larger context of the government’s battles with foreign institutions in general. Most foreign governments did not recognize Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank and still believed that Jerusalem should be internationalized. The Hashemite government also painted itself as a secular power with legitimate authority and began to interfere with non-Muslim communities, such as the processes of choosing the Armenian Orthodox patriarch. King Hussein proclaimed himself as the protector of Christian

\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Anderson, 66.}}}\]  
\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Munif, 54.}}}\]  
\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Hobsbawm, 9.}}}\]  
\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Katz, 97.}}}\]  
\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Ibid., 81.}}}\]  
\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Ibid., 93.}}}\]
holy places and, asserting secular authority, began renovating Christian holy places in 1953. It is important to note that control of religion was not limited to Christian sites and practices. The Hashemite monarchy also undermined the authority of the Higher Muslim Council, which was formerly headed by Abdullah’s rival Hajj Amin al-Husayni, and moved the Palestinian waqf from Jerusalem to Amman. The monarchy’s assertion of control over Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem will be discussed in the section below.

_Holy Places in Jerusalem, 1954-1964_

Despite seventeen years of official annexation and an additional twenty-one years of administrative ties, there are few signs of Jordan’s past control of the West Bank today. However, it was not for lack of trying, at least in the spheres of religious and national sites with tourist potential. Abdullah himself ‘invented’ traditions and performed a particular identity and authority by attending prayers at the Al-Aqsa mosque every Friday in Jerusalem, thus symbolically and spatially reinforcing the relationship between the Hashemites and Islam and presenting himself as the utmost authority in Jerusalem. But ultimately, actions spoke louder than words and the Jordanian government’s discrimination against Palestinians undermined any sort of Hashemite claims of support for the Palestinian cause or Islamic legitimacy in monarchical discourse. Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank was not legally recognized and Jordan had therefore no legal authority to administer the holy sites in Jerusalem. In fact, Hussein’s government

---

116 Katz, 101; Ibid., 103. It is unclear whether the restriction of Christian missionary influence is related to limiting the influence of Christian Palestinians. Christians in Jordan have been overrepresented in government since the mandate period but most of the Jordanian-Christians who have reached the top levels of government are from the East Bank. Furthermore, some Palestinian nationalist movements such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) were led by Christian, middle-class Palestinians. Gandolfo argues that discrimination against Christian Palestinians is usually based on national origin, rather than faith (Gandolfo, 445-450).

117 Benvenisti, 24.

118 Katz, 91.
did not focus on religious sites at first. Although Abdullah treated the city like a second capital and decreed that Friday prayers would be held in Jerusalem, Sofer argues that Hussein’s attitude to Jerusalem was quite different. After Abdullah’s assassination, the Jordanian government “treated the city with utmost severity,” harshly stopping riots and reacting to violence with violence. Hussein himself did not pray at the Al-Aqsa mosque until 1960. It was Palestinian representatives themselves who, soon after Jordan failed to make Jerusalem the capital, called for Jerusalem to be treated as a spiritual center. At this time in the mid-1950s, the Jordanian government took no action. According to Sofer, the Jordanian government only began using the slogans of Jerusalem being the second capital and the spiritual capital of Jordan in 1960, as a response to domestic turmoil and the pressures of Arab nationalism. In 1963, Hussein established a Hashemite palace in Jerusalem, thus creating a tangible symbol of Hashemite control. But Sofer points out that the Jordanian government wanted to limit Jerusalem’s political rule to prevent the city from becoming a symbol of Palestinian separatism and opposition. Therefore, the Hashemites emphasized the religious importance of Jerusalem through written and performative discourse.

The Hashemite monarchy framed its control over the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem in terms of a discourse of Islamic legitimacy, citing the Hashemites’ descent from the Prophet Muhammad and their historical role as the guardians of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The Jordanian government asserted its control over the holy sites

---

120 Sofer, 83; Ibid., 87.
121 Ibid., 85-86. However, the Jordanian government did begin promoting religious festivals and pilgrimage events from 1953 onwards and, in 1953, hosted a ‘World Islamic Congress’ in Jerusalem (Padon, 99).
122 Ibid., 87.
123 Ibid., 90.
when it began to conduct renovations at the Dome of the Rock in the late 1950s. By conducting renovations, the Hashemite monarchy could signal the significance of the holy sites to the government and also tangibly claim sovereignty over the physical space of the sites. For example, Hashemite banners were placed around the entrances of the Dome of the Rock during celebrations and festivals. These performances and claims of sovereignty follow from practices during the mandate period: Arab leaders exacerbated clashes by claiming that the Jewish population wanted to capture the Dome of the Rock and Abdullah himself frequently made pilgrimages to Sherif Husayn’s grave.

According to Katz, other Arab states did not criticize Jordan on religious grounds when the Hashemite government asserted its authority over the religious sites, indicating that other Arab states at least de facto accepted the Hashemites’ discourse of Islamic legitimacy. Furthermore, over time, the Arab states gave de facto recognition of Jordan’s annexation of Jerusalem by accepting and even celebrating the renovations. Katz claims that some Arab states provided funds and vocally supported the renovations and many representatives from the Arab states, as well as Muslim states, participated in the 1964 ceremony to celebrate the completed renovations. These Arab states also considered themselves protectors of Jerusalem; therefore, they could also participate in a discourse of Islamic legitimacy by contributing to renovations and setting up charities in Jerusalem.

According to Katz, Jordanian government officials were very aware of the symbolic significance of the 1964 celebration ceremony of the completed renovations. The committee set up to supervise the ceremony spent most of its time and effort

---

124 Katz, 90.
125 Ibid., 114.
126 Sofer, 73-74.
128 Sofer, 77.
discussing symbols, images, and rituals that would make the celebration ‘Jordanian’.\textsuperscript{129} The Jordanian Tourism Department was extremely involved in the ceremony: Images of Jordan were displayed during the celebrations to ensure that foreign representatives would see them. In addition, the department decided that guests would also visit the tomb of Sherif Husayn, Abdullah’s father and the former king of the Hijaz, in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{130}

The inclusion of Sherif Husayn in Jerusalem’s historical and spatial fabric is an example of an invented tradition. Katz writes that Hashemite narratives of Jordanian history indicate that Sherif Husayn wanted to include Jerusalem in his Arab state during negotiations with the British, indicating that the Hashemites had always cared for Jerusalem and its Islamic sites but colonial powers impeded their project of Arab and Islamic unity.\textsuperscript{131} Despite having never lived there and having limited activities in the city, Sherif Husayn was buried in Jerusalem. Katz argues that Sherif Husayn’s grave became part of the ‘Hashemite legacy’ that the Hashemite monarchy created and drew upon as an Islamic discourse of legitimation for its annexation of Jerusalem. By inventing a past, the Hashemites could control the official narrative of the present.\textsuperscript{132}

During the ceremony, King Hussein spoke ‘in the name of the one united Jordanian family’ and he spoke of how Jordan was blessed with holy places, from Mecca and Medina to the holy sites in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{133} These sites were all under Hashemite control or guardianship, implying that Jordan was, above all, a Hashemite state. Jordan was in no way associated with Mecca and Medina aside from all places having Hashemite rulers. Thus, Jordan was blessed because of the Hashemite guardians

\textsuperscript{129} Katz, 108.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 32-33.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 109.
protecting these Islamic sites. Aside from Islamic discourse, these celebrations also gave the Jordanian opportunities to participate in the discourse of Arab nationalism. After the 1964 celebration, the Filastin newspaper printed a photo of King Hussein and Gamal Abdul Nasser standing on either side of the newly renovated Dome of the Rock.\(^{134}\) This image was a signal that Hussein and Nasser, who were on the opposite sides of the battle regarding what kind of Arab nationalism should be promoted, had reconciled due to their common bond of Islam. The Hashemites sought to legitimize Jordan’s place in the Arab world with its control of Islamic holy sites. During speeches at al-Haram al-Sharif, Hussein called Jordan the defender of the Arab world due to its proximity to Israel but also due to the Hashemites’ history of ‘defending the land and the nation’ and their allegiance to Islam. Hussein cited Sherif Husayn’s burial in Jerusalem as a sign of the Hashemites’ struggle for the Arab cause.\(^{135}\)

This discourse of Islamic legitimacy did not just serve to strengthen the Hashemite regime’s place in the Arab world. One of the reasons that Abdullah wanted to gain Palestinian territory was the touristic value of Jerusalem. The Hashemite government appropriated the holy places in Jerusalem as representative of Jordan in order for Jordan to conceivably market itself as the Holy Land. The Tourism Department was already heavily involved in the 1964 ceremony to celebrate the newly renovated Dome of the Rock. According to Katz, Jordan’s identification as the Holy Land “not only accorded the kingdom regional legitimacy but also added a global responsibility to care for and protect the world’s religious heritage.”\(^{136}\) Before Jordan’s appropriation of the term for tourism purposes in the 1950s, ‘Holy Land’ had only appeared in religious discourse. But

\(^{134}\) Katz, 111.
\(^{135}\) Ibid., 116-117.
\(^{136}\) Ibid., 118.
once ‘Holy Land’ became a powerful term in touristic discourse, Israel soon began competing with Jordan for the title. ‘Holy Land’ became a slogan for Christian and Muslim audiences and this term transformed Jerusalem’s holy places into national spaces. Furthermore, by cultural appropriation, the Jordanian government gave no thought to the actual usability of these spaces. According to travellers, women and children frequently played in the courtyard of Al-Haram Al-Sharif; Jerusalem as a whole was one of the centers of clashes with the government. But the Hashemite government glossed over these aspects of Jerusalem’s spaces and presented Jerusalem as a timeless city dominated by its religious significance.

The Jordanian tourism industry received aid and guidance from the United States and thus, part of the Holy Land image that Jordan portrayed conformed to Western, romanticized visions of the Holy Land as ancient and exotic. In response, the Jordan Tourism Department broadcast the 1955 Christmas celebrations in Jerusalem to Western audiences and produced two films about Jordan as the Holy Land. According to Katz, American representatives had advised the Jordanian tourism department to “blend the ancient and modern,” in keeping with the custom of inventing traditions and an ancient past to blot out the Hashemite state’s short political history. The tourism department published articles around Christmas and Easter citing pilgrimages during the Roman period and praising pilgrims during the modern period. Jordan also participated in world fairs and international expositions around the world to display reproductions of its

137 Katz, 118.  
139 Katz, 120.  
140 Ibid., 119; Ibid., 121.  
141 Ibid., 122.  
142 Ibid., 122-123.
holy places to Western audiences. One of the objects displayed at the 1964-1965 New York World’s Fair was one of the Dead Sea scrolls, which, according to the *Jerusalem Times*, “symbolized the Jordanian religious tradition.”

Pope Paul VI’s visit to the Holy Land in 1964 was highly promoted. King Hussein positioned himself as a Muslim mediator when the Pope met with the patriarch of the Orthodox Church. During speeches addressed to the Pope and global Christian communities, Hussein reinforced Jordan’s status as the Holy Land and the Hashemites’ constructed long history of toleration. He stated, “For centuries…we have been welcoming pilgrims to the holy places in this country, the Holy Land” and he pledged to defend Christian holy places forever. The Pope’s visit also prompted a new stamp series that showed the Pope represented Christian sites and King Hussein representing Muslim sites, thus indicating an equal relationship between the Pope and Hussein and positioning the latter as both a national ruler of the holy places and the leader of the Islamic world. In doing so, the Hashemite government removed “the link between the sites and Palestinian historical memory” and created a “Jordanian historical and contemporary view of Jerusalem’s holy places.” The display of the relationship between Hussein and the Pope may have also been an effort to unite Palestinian Muslims and Christians against the Israeli Jewish population, a discourse that had begun in 1948. These tourism initiatives seemed to work: tourism in Jordan increased by nearly 30% in 1965. But despite the regime’s efforts, some newspapers questioned the

---

143 Katz, 130.
144 Ibid., 125.
145 Ibid., 125.
146 Ibid., 129.
147 Sofer, 78.
148 Katz, 129.
Jordanian government’s nation-building efforts. One article spoke of how the region was split into Israel and Palestine and addressed the holy sites and the Pope’s visit without mentioning Jordan at all.\textsuperscript{149} By extending Jordanian traditions back in history, King Hussein himself promoted Jordan as old-yet-new, in order to increase its tourism value but also to show that Jordan was more than an artificial creation but was a legitimate nation-state with an ancient history determined by great rulers. The Hashemites were the latest in the territory’s history of great rulers, and they hoped to be the last. But Sofer argues that the government’s actions had no effect on relations between the Jordanian government and the Palestinians because the government did not wholeheartedly believe in enhancing Jerusalem’s importance.\textsuperscript{150} Contrary to the goals of the Jordanian government, Jerusalem actually became a center of opposition activity and a strong symbol of a separate Palestinian national identity.

\textit{Nationalization of the Palestine Archeological Museum (PAM), 1966}

The Jordanian government did not limit itself to claiming and appropriating holy places. One of its targets was the Palestine Archeological Museum (PAM). The museum was built with the funding of American philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr., who decreed that the Palestine government should be responsible for building and administering the museum.\textsuperscript{151} In the lead-up to the termination of the British mandate in Palestine, the British decided to transfer ownership and management to an international board of trustees, which included representatives from the Jordanian government, the British government in Jordan, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{152}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{149} Katz, 128.  \\
\textsuperscript{150} Sofer, 86; Ibid., 90.  \\
\textsuperscript{151} CO733/142/5  \\
\textsuperscript{152} Alec Kirbriode, \textit{From the Wings} (London: Frank Cass, 1976), 19.
\end{flushright}
In 1966, the Jordanian government took over the museum. Sir Alec Kirkbride, a founding member of the board of trustees, seems to attribute the nationalization of the museum to the board of trustees. In his memoirs, he writes:

On the excuse that the annual revenue from the endowment and from fees charged for admission, was insufficient for the proper maintenance of the Museum, the trustees made over the place and its contents to the Jordanian Government. I am sure that it might have been possible to raise the funds needed to preserve its independence as an international institution.\textsuperscript{153}

However, reports from Kathleen Kenyon, an archeologist and another member of the board, and the British Foreign Office tell a different story. It is important to remember that by the time the museum was nationalized, Kirkbride had resigned and left Jordan for Libya, and heard about the story from afar. Perhaps his memoirs are an indication of how the Jordanian government told the story, as Kathleen Kenyon’s letter indicated that news articles painted the board of trustees as incompetent.\textsuperscript{154} Kathleen Kenyon believed that Jordan should ultimately control the museum but, in 1966, the Jordanian Department of Antiquities was, in her opinion, incapable of administering the museum. According to her reports, Dr. Awni Dajani, the director of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, met with the board and claimed that the department was competent and provided a list of qualified university graduates to prove it. Dajani stated that the museum would be a point of national pride and that Jordan was a stable, well-advanced country now and was entirely capable of running the museum.\textsuperscript{155} The board had no choice but to acquiesce and on September 1, 1966, the Jordanian flag was hoisted above the museum for the first time.\textsuperscript{156} The story of the museum shows the importance of museums and visual and

\textsuperscript{153} Kirkbride, 104.
\textsuperscript{154} FO 924/1672 (CR 1809/14 (B))
\textsuperscript{155} FO 924/1672 (CR 1809/14 (A))
\textsuperscript{156} FO 924/1672 (CR 1809/14)
spatial narratives in creating national space and national history. In fact, after Israel annexed the West Bank, the Israeli government renamed the museum the ‘Rockefeller Museum’,\(^{157}\) thus erasing the museum’s Palestinian roots.

**Conclusion**

In 1967, Israel went to war with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and consequently invaded and annexed the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, much of the Golan Heights, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. After its retreat, Jordan lost the West Bank but still maintained administrative ties, including Jordanian citizenship for the West Bank residents. But Jordan had lost the holy places in Jerusalem. Subsequently, the Jordanian government shifted and began promoting non-religious places in the East Bank for tourism purposes, especially in the aftermath of the civil war. Day argues that the true challenge for the Jordanian government’s plans for a pan-Jordanian identity came with the establishment of the PLO in 1964, which he claims “gave new life to the idea of a separate Palestinian national identity.”\(^{158}\) But discourses of a Palestinian national identity were already strong before the establishment of the PLO and pan-Jordanianism seemed to be a much weaker force than pan-Arabism.

One of the questions raised in this chapter was to what extent the Jordanian government ‘Jordanized’ the West Bank and the Palestinian population? During the period of annexation, popular discourses of Jordanian national identity were, as analyzed above, only emerging and Jordanians themselves were divided between those loyal and those opposed to the monarchy. The government’s discourse of national identity focused

\(^{157}\) Katz, 134.
\(^{158}\) Day, 43.
on pan-Jordanianism, a discourse that the government used to appropriate Jerusalem and co-opt Palestinians, rather than impose any sense of Jordanianness. What is clear is that the Jordanian government’s vocal support for the Palestinian cause of return to their homeland did not translate into action. Furthermore, the Jordanian-Palestinian divide became truly salient in terms of national identity after the civil war in 1970, which will be discussed in the third chapter. The Jordanian government’s project of developing a pan-Jordanian identity seemed to fail once policies of Jordanization and de-Palestinization were implemented after 1970. However, Jordan remains the legal protector and administrator of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, as outlined in the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994. Clearly, the Jordanian government still sees value in controlling Muslim sites as part of a discourse of Islamic legitimacy. Since Israel began its occupation of the West Bank, one of the only ties between the Hashemite monarchy and Jerusalem has been the administration of the Muslim holy sites. This remains a source of legitimacy that the monarchy draws upon to increase its authority as the ruler of Jordan and as a leader of the Arab and Islamic worlds.
Discourses of a Tribalized National Identity, 1967 to 1990

Introduction

Discourses engaging tribal identities and tribalized national identities have been and remain salient in Jordan today. In this thesis, the concept of tribalism does not refer to a particular pre-state or sub-state social or political organization but a discursive use of references to such organization in the past for political purposes in the present. As Jungen also argues, with this meaning, tribalism is not merely a vestige of past pre-modern days but has been actively constructed by the Hashemites during the state building process.1 Some Jordanians’ criticisms of tribalism can be read as responses to assertions of a tribalized Jordanian national identity that began to emerge after Black September. This section explores how Palestinians came to be excluded from discourses of national identity and how narratives of tribal autochthony developed in order to create a discourse of tribalized national identity.

The 1967 war between Israel and the Arab states can be considered a turning point in Jordan’s history. Not only did the Jordanian state lose approximately 38% of its GDP and approximately half of its population, it lost the credibility required for its claim to represent Palestinians. How could the Hashemite government still claim a legitimate discourse of pan-Jordanian identity without Jerusalem and the West Bank? The flailing pan-Jordanian identity was dealt a decisive blow in 1970, when the Jordanian government drove Palestinian militias out of Jordanian territory in the conflict known as ‘Black September’. In academic literature, 1970 is seen as the decisive split between

Jordanians and Palestinians that led to the exclusion of Palestinians from Jordanian national identity.

Since the discourse of pan-Jordanianism was no longer feasible, during the 1970s and 1980s, the Jordanian government embarked on a new discourse of Jordanian national identity and actively promoted a ‘tribalized’ national identity. Tribal customs and traditions were presented as uniquely and, more importantly, authentically Jordanian. During the mandate period, tribal identities were politicized in that tribal identities were no longer limited to constructions of the rights and duties of kinship and concrete social relations expressed in that idiom but began to be used to access benefits and services from the state and to establish differential power relations within and between tribes. Increasingly, different groups evoked notions of tribal solidarity and identity for political use in relation to the state and applied the category of ‘tribe’ to people who did not necessarily have strong social relations with each other. As Droz-Vincent argues, family networks and the power relations implied with such kinship relations were not hegemonic but reinvented in certain circumstances, such as elections. This category of tribe was also claimed by people who had not historically organized as tribes, such as the Circassians. As state power grew, the tribal network became less essential and less powerful but the tribal identity remained salient in this restructured form. The government’s discourse of tribalized national identity was supported by individuals from

---

2 Philippe Droz-Vincent, “Cities, Urban Notables and the State in Jordan,” in Cities, Urban Practices and Nation Building in Jordan, ed. Myriam Ababsa and Rami Daher (Beirut: Presses de l’Ifpo, 2011), 120. The parliamentary elections during the 1980s and 1990s can be examined as case studies for how tribal identities are actively used and how they demonstrate heterogenization, rather than homogenization. In the 1989 election, some candidates relied mostly on their tribal networks to gain votes and a few candidates even changed their name to reflect an imagined ‘tribal’ origin. Other candidates wanted to be elected on their individual merit alone (Fathi, 203; Fathi, 207). As tribal structures, large tribal confederations became more politically divided during elections. More candidates from the same tribal confederation, especially individuals from weaker clans in the tribe who wanted to challenge the historical sheikhly family’s authority, competed with each other for the same seat (Fathi, 203-205).
tribes who began writing ‘tribal histories’ in the 1990s as ways to show that their ‘tribe’, a group of individuals who theoretically had concrete social relations with each other based on kinship, was autochthonous. However, as Shryock points out, these narratives of tribal histories could potentially undermine the state’s discourse of national identity because these narratives emphasized heterogenous groups rather than homogenous groups. These narratives emphasized the differences between tribes, between Bedouin and settled populations, and between Jordanians and Palestinians. This discourse of autochthonous Jordanian identity had a dialectic relationship with the Jordanian government’s discourse of a tribalized Jordanian national identity.

At the same time, the Hashemite monarchy began promoting Jordanian unity based on values of pan-Islam and Arab-Muslim unity. The Hashemite monarchy reshaped a discourse of Islamic legitimacy that was not based on its protection of Jerusalem but on creating Jordan’s own visual Islamic identity in the context of Islamism during the 1970s and 1980s. Fathi argues that before 1970 the Hashemite monarchy delineated a Jordanian national identity by emphasizing who was not Jordanian. After 1970, the state attempted to base its discourse of national identity on common respect for institutions and common loyalty to the state. The state was creating the nation by emphasizing ‘unity in diversity’.³

In order to examine changes in the Jordanian government’s discourse of Jordanian national identity after the 1967 war and Black September, I will analyze the context of Black September and the discourse that focused on Jordanian national identity in opposition to the Palestinian population. I will chart the emergence of a discourse of a tribalized national identity by examining its historical roots and analyzing recent discourses that denationalized or excluded Palestinians in order to make claims of tribal

autochthony. I will then examine two different Hashemite narratives of Jordanian national identity: one based on tribalism and the other a discourse of Islamic legitimacy in the form of mosque-building in Amman. The discourses of tribalism and Islamic legitimacy as expressed in public spaces will be examined in further detail in the fourth chapter, along with discourses drawing on ancient history and neoliberalism that emerged in the 1990s.

**War and Loss, 1967-1972**

During the 1960s, the Jordanian government made several attempts at Palestinian incorporation and integration. Wasfi al-Tall, prime minister of Jordan from 1962 to 1963 and again from 1965 to 1967, wanted to broaden the monarchy’s bases of support and he targeted the young and the educated, many of them Palestinians. In order to gain the loyalty of this class, al-Tall worked to increase personal freedom, released 159 prisoners with amnesty, and cut down on military and security checkpoints. In short, Jordan operated less like a police state. However, the 1967 war impeded any political and cultural integration that occurred. During the 1950s and early 1960s, Jordan was politically isolated and desperately needed to boost its position in the eyes of Arab nationalists. But King Hussein was not willing to give up his power and Western support in favor of Nasser’s version of radical, anti-imperialist Arab nationalism. Despite such tensions, relations between Jordan and Egypt thawed with the 1967 war with Israel. Both Nasser and Hussein needed to be seen as legitimate in the context of Arab nationalism so

---

Hussein travelled to Cairo to sign a mutual defense pact with Nasser in May 1967. But the war led to humiliating defeat for the Arab states. In just six days, the Israeli air force managed to destroy Egypt’s air force and the Jordanian army was driven out of Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israel began its occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai, and parts of the Golan Heights. Many people all over the Arab world were crushed that after nineteen years of Arab nationalists’ promises of Arab victory against Israel, victory never came. The discourse of pan-Arabism became much weaker after 1967, which helped facilitate the rise of state nationalisms, especially for Palestinians, who increasingly believed that none of the Arab states could help them return to Palestine. Thus, militias became more popular as a means of trying to reclaim Palestinian territory.6

One such militia was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which became a threat to the Hashemite monarchy’s legitimacy and security. In order to improve relations with Egypt, Jordan accepted the creation of the PLO at the Cairo Summit in 1964. The PLO initially stated that it would cooperate with the Jordanian government and King Hussein claimed that the PLO would not harm the “unity of our one Jordanian family…rather, on the contrary, it will strengthen and deepen this unity and double its abilities to grow and take off.”7 But Palestinian militias’ raids into Israel increased substantially in the late 1960s, jeopardizing Jordan’s uneasy ceasefire with Israel. As Day argues, Jordan was caught in a double-bind: “Efforts to turn back the guerrilla operations were regarded as anti-Palestinian. When the raids were not prevented and the Israeli

---

retaliation came, the Jordanian army was criticized…”8 Furthermore, the PLO claimed that the East Bank had been torn from Palestine in 1919 and thus should be returned to the motherland of Palestine. King Hussein responded that the PLO and other Palestinian militias threatened Arab unity,9 but public sympathy for the Palestinian militias endured.

In 1970, the Jordanian government decided to take military action against the guerrillas due to their ‘provocations’, several of which according to Massad, were actually started by Jordanian agents in order to provide excuses for the Jordanian Army to take military action during events known as ‘Black September’.10 After approximately a year of violence and conflicts, which allegedly killed at least 1,000 people, the Jordanian government succeeded in driving Palestinian militias out of Jordan and the leaders of the PLO fled to exile in Lebanon. This conflict between the Jordanian government and the various Palestinian militias has been described in historiography as a ‘civil war’. But it is important to note that the conflict did not strictly fall along lines of national origin. Transjordanians who opposed the monarchy were involved in the Palestinian militias and, according to Massad, 5,000 members of the Jordan Army defected to the militias during and after the war.11 As for Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship, the majority stayed out of the conflict and many Palestinian members of the Jordanian Army chose to remain in the military, rather than defect to the militias.12

10 Massad, 240.
11 Ibid., 208.
'East Bank First': Government De-Palestinization and De-Palestinized Discourse

Black September strengthened a discourse of Jordanian national identity that was formed in opposition to the Palestinian other. This discourse emerged in parallel to the Jordanian government’s policy of ‘de-Palestinization’. Many Palestinians in the government and the military were removed from their posts and the government ceased to actively recruit Palestinians for employment. Thus, Palestinian-Jordanians established themselves further in the private sector.\textsuperscript{13} Furthermore, an ‘East Banker first’ discourse emerged: more Transjordanians began articulating the idea that Transjordanians should be favored. This discourse may have been largely based on competition for resources as the state increasingly modeled itself as a welfare state.\textsuperscript{14} Jordan suffered rising inflation and increasing costs of living during the 1970s. In 1979, various Bedouin groups staged a protest in Amman.\textsuperscript{15} This shows that the Bedouins did not always support the Jordanian government and the erosion of their economic bases and political power can be considered factors that contributed to the emergence of tribal narratives and assertions of tribal identities in the 1980s and 1990s. Since access to the state was structured by a neopatronage system based on politicized tribal identities (as discussed in the first chapter), members of tribes needed to emphasize their tribal identities and claims of autochthony to claim the right of access to the Hashemite state. Furthermore, during the 1980s, Jordan experienced a decrease in remittances sent from mostly Palestinian-Jordanian workers in the Gulf and a decrease in aid from the Gulf states, which reduced both public and private

\textsuperscript{13} Brand, “Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity,” 53.
\textsuperscript{14} Day, 71.
\textsuperscript{15} Fathi, 188-189.
incomes. Unemployment increased, which was exacerbated by Palestinian migrants’ return to Jordan after the Gulf War, allowing for the argument that Palestinians created a strain on state services. These economic factors increased competition for state resources and thus could be the source of tensions that were framed as national or inter-tribal differences between Jordanians and Palestinians and between different tribes at a moment that discourse of exclusion of Palestinians emerges. By the 1990s, more Transjordanians felt that they were participants in a zero-sum game: If Palestinians gained more resources and power, Transjordanians would lose both political and economic power. ‘Abd al-Hadi al-Majali, a member of Parliament and leader of the ‘Ahd political party, stated in a newspaper article, “The Palestinian who lives among us and wishes to maintain…his Palestinian political identity, has the right to live without discrimination…but he does not have the right to work in Jordan political institutions.” This discourse of a Jordanian national identity is exclusively Transjordanian (meaning East Bank and excludes Palestinians) and undercuts the Jordanian government’s efforts to create a discursive national identity that was applicable to all Jordanian citizens. Furthermore, the Israeli government’s repeated slogans of ‘Jordan is Palestine’ during the 1980s, an attempt to legitimize its own deportation of Palestinians by claiming that Jordan could be a homeland for the Palestinians, seemed to align with the Hashemite government’s previous discourse of a pan-Jordanian identity, thus exacerbating its unpopularity.

---

19 Maffi, 147.
During the 1970s, the Jordanian government began articulating a more exclusive East Bank Jordanian identity by promoting non-religious sites on the East Bank for tourism purposes. Government tourism campaigns featured ancient ruins and castles and, beginning in the 1990s, Jordan also began promoting itself as a ‘Holy Land’ with the promotion of an alleged baptism site on the East Bank.\(^{20}\) Despite the emergence of Islamist movements from the 1970s onwards, the Jordanian government was still very willing to capitalize on its Christian history and heritage in order to compete in the tourism industry. But despite such tourism initiatives on the East Bank, the Hashemite monarchy clearly still valued the religious and symbolic power of Jerusalem. According to Katz, images of Jerusalem’s holy places still appear on stamps and banknotes. Despite Israel’s occupation and Jordan’s official disengagement from the West Bank in 1988,\(^{21}\) the Jordanian government’s discourse of Jordanian national identity has continued to include the symbol of Jerusalem until today.\(^{22}\)

*Accents and Clothing: A Discourse of Difference*

The ‘East Banker first’ discourse is an aspect of popular discourses of difference that emerged in the 1970s. Cultural markers such as accents and clothing also indicate a change in discourse of Jordan national identity that excluded Palestinians and privileged Transjordanianness. This Transjordanianness was distinctly based on so-called ‘tribal’ culture. Formerly urban and rural accents became imbued with national meaning and became known as ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Transjordanian’ accents, respectively, despite the fact that urban Transjordanians used to speak with so-called Palestinian accents and rural

\(^{20}\) Katz, 147.
\(^{21}\) The official disengagement from the West Bank involved cutting off all legal and administrative ties, such as stopping the practice of paying the salaries of civil servants in the West Bank.
\(^{22}\) Katz, 146-147.
Palestinians spoke with ‘Transjordanian’ accents. Furthermore, these accents took on a gendered dimension as the formerly urban, now Palestinian accent became encouraged for women and the rural ‘Transjordanian’ accent was designated for men. After 1970, most urban Transjordanian men picked up the rural accent and urban Palestinian-Jordanian men felt pressure to do the same.\textsuperscript{23} The changes in who could speak with what accent not only marked separate national identities but also feminized Palestinians. Massad argues that Bedouins had the advantage of controlling the narratives on masculine and feminine accents because many Bedouins believed that urban accents were feminine. Thus, the dominant discourses on gender and national origin reflect the state’s success in incorporating Bedouins and ‘Bedouinizing’ Jordanians.\textsuperscript{24}

Clothing such as the \textit{keffiyeh} also took on a new meaning as it turned into a visual marker of difference between Transjordanians and Palestinians. During the 1970s, it became increasingly popular for Transjordanian young men to wear red and white \textit{keffiyehs}, a type of scarf that was supposedly originally worn by Bedouins and has come to symbolize Transjordanian national pride. Palestinian youths began wearing black and white \textit{keffiyehs}, which became a symbol of Palestinian national identity. These color schemes did not originally evoke ideas of national identity. Previously, both Transjordanians and Palestinian Bedouins wore white or black and white headcloths. The red and white \textit{keffiyehs} were in fact General John Glubb’s invention. Black September intensified a discourse of autochthony and this is reflected in performances of identity such as adopting the right accent and wearing the right \textit{keffiyeh} to mark ‘true’ Jordanianness. This discourse was reinforced by the monarchy; King Hussein himself

\textsuperscript{23} Massad, 251.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 252.
began wearing the red and white *keffiyeh* during state visits and when he met with tribal leaders and soldiers much more frequently after the war.\(^{25}\) This performance of tribalized legitimacy continued with the reign of King Abdullah II, the son of Hussein. In the 2002 banknote series, all the Hashemite kings from Sherif Husayn to Abdullah II appear on the notes with *keffiyehs* rather than Western dress.\(^{26}\) Images of the Hashemite leaders in most offices, shops, and restaurants in Amman also show the leaders in both Western suits and white *thubs* (robes) and red and white *keffiyehs*. The Hashemites have appropriated this colonial invention of tribal fashion as a symbol of Jordanian national identity and Transjordanians and Palestinians have also adopted these performances of national identity. By doing so, they propagate the idea that Transjordanians and Palestinians constitute two separate nations and rural and tribal customs become evidence of Transjordanian autochthony.

*Colonial Roots of Tribalized National Culture*

Markers such as accents, food, and clothing have come to represent Transjordanian national identity and were based on supposedly tribal culture. One of the roots of this discourse of tribalized national identity, which is deployed at both the government and at the popular level, was the colonial production of tribal culture. In his book *Colonial Effects*, Massad claims that the so-called tribal or Bedouin customs and traditions that are performed in Jordan today as representations of Jordanian national culture, such as drinking tea or eating the national dish *mansaf*, are actually, if not at least invented by colonial figures such as John Glubb, then reinvented in the context of colonial indirect rule. The state-sponsored and widely accepted representations of a

---

\(^{25}\) Massad, 250; Ibid., 121.

\(^{26}\) Katz, 150.
tribalized Jordanian national culture and identity, which is usually presented as timeless and ancient, were actually reshaped during colonial rule in the 1930s.

Glubb was a military man and displayed paternalistic Orientalist tendencies when discussing his relationship with his Bedouin soldiers. As mentioned in the first chapter, he led the Desert Patrol, a branch of the Arab Legion, as a means of incorporating Bedouin tribesmen into the state. He had a very keen eye for detail and he knew exactly what he wanted his soldiers to look like. According to Massad:

Glubb was a voyeuristic aesthete with equal commitment to colorful exhibitionism, albeit an exhibitionism projected onto his Bedouin subjects *qua* spectacle. He was meticulous in his plans for the production of a new species of Bedouins, nay, a new species of Arabs, albeit a species that came to be known as Jordanian. He knew exactly what the new Arab soldier should look like…what he should view as traditional and culture, what he should accept as suitable modernity…In that, Glubb’s project entailed molding the Bedouin’s body and mind into something new.27

Glubb himself believed that “In [Bedouins] also we find the most typical surviving examples of that purely Arab way of life, which amongst other Arab communities, has come to a greater or lesser degree diluted by mixture with foreign influences.”28 His discourse of Arab purity and the Bedouins being a martial race is typical of British colonists’ tendencies to ascribe different epistemologies to constructed categories of ‘races’.

His memoirs provide a detailed description of the soldiers’ uniform: Long ‘traditional’ Bedouin robes but now reinvented in khaki, a red sash, a belt and bandolier for ammunition, and a silver dagger. The Bedouin soldiers’ uniform also included a newly invented red and white *keffiyeh*, which was discussed previously as a symbol of Transjordanian national identity in opposition to a Palestinian national identity.

27 Massad, 117.
symbolized by the black and white *keffiyeh*. The red and white *keffiyeh* has a short history as Glubb invented the *keffiyeh* in the 1930s. Other Jordanians usually wore pure white or black and white *keffiyehs* and other Arab Legion soldiers wore helmets.\(^{29}\) Glubb proudly claims, “The effect was impressive. Soon the tribesmen were complaining that the prettiest girls would accept none but our soldiers for their lovers.”\(^{30}\) Glubb’s statement ascribes the Bedouin soldiers with more masculinity in relation to other Jordanian men. Yet the Bedouin soldiers cannot be viewed as more masculine and more capable than Glubb himself in colonial Orientalist discourse. Therefore, Glubb also devotes parts of his memoirs to stories of the Bedouins’ gentleness and learning how to read under Glubb’s tutorship.\(^{31}\) Using this discourse, Glubb elevated the Bedouin soldiers as ‘pure Arabs’ and more masculine than (and thus superior to) sedentary and urban Jordanians but ultimately inferior to the hyper-masculinized Glubb himself. Glubb used his own vision of what Bedouin culture should look like and redefined Bedouin customs and recoded them as traditional.\(^{32}\)

Aside from uniforms and fashion, colonial rule also influence Bedouins’ eating and drinking habits. Jordan was opened up to other British territories for trade and Bedouin soldiers were introduced to military rations. According to Massad, Bedouin tribespeople usually relied on camel meat but, once Jordan’s trade relations were established, camel meat became much less common. Furthermore, the prices of tea and rice lowered and thus they became more popular. Formerly coffee drinkers, the Bedouins, in Glubb’s words, “learned to drink tea” and contemporary Jordanian academic and

\(^{29}\) Massad, 121.
\(^{30}\) Glubb, 103.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., 161; Ibid., 174.
\(^{32}\) Massad, 148.
government discourses also claim that tea is the most common beverage in Jordan, all the while obscuring tea’s colonial history in Jordan. But the dish that perhaps is displayed as the most popular symbol of Bedouin and Jordanian national culture is mansaf. Various tourism brochures include sections about mansaf being Jordan’s national dish and list restaurants for tourists to specifically try mansaf. Jordanians themselves also speak of mansaf as the national dish in popular discourse and Jeffrey Goldberg, author of the March 2013 article about King Abdullah II in The Atlantic, made sure to point out the king’s lunch with tribal leaders in Karak where they ate mansaf “in the Bedouin tradition.” Mansaf is now made with white rice and lamb cooked in jamid, a yogurt sauce made from goat milk. But until the early twentieth century when the prices of rice fell due to increased trade with other colonial territories, Bedouins only used rice on festive occasions and thus usually cooked mansaf with bread. But mansaf with rice, with its colonial roots, has now been recoded as traditional. Massad states that Glubb “repressed and erased much in the Bedouins’ way of life that conflicted with imperial interests” but he also “produced much that was new and combined it with what was ‘inoffensive’ and ‘beneficial’ in their ‘tradition’ in a new amalgam of what was packaged as real Bedouin culture.” These colonial inventions of ‘traditions’ are considered in popular discourse today to be authentic and Glubb’s productions of culture is one of the roots of the tribal culture that became representative of national culture in official discourses of national identity.

33 Massad, 158-159.
35 Massad, 158-159.
36 Ibid., 159.
Bedouins’ Historical Support for the Monarchy

Another root of the discourse of tribalized national identity is the fact that Bedouins have historically supported the monarchy, which is leveraged discursively to portray Bedouins as the ideal Jordanian citizen. Due to their means of incorporation into the Hashemite state, Bedouins are usually associated with the military. Employment by the military itself is an important component of East Bank Transjordanians’ subjectivities, as discussed in the second chapter. The significance of the military in Transjordanian subjectivity could be partly attributed to the military’s dramatic increase in political and cultural power after Black September as King Hussein decided to tighten security around the country. While the civil government was undergoing ‘de-Palestinization’, King Hussein began spending more time with the military and involving high-ranking officers in palace politics. In Massad’s words, the increased political power of the military led to more “tribalist Bedouin chauvinism” and different tribes competed for power, to the extent that the king needed to intervene in conflicts between tribes. The Jordanian government also started producing television programs about the military: In 1970 alone, there were sixteen special television programs about the Jordanian Army. Patriotic army songs began playing on television and King Hussein displayed himself more in military uniform with other soldiers. According to Massad, these displays of military culture continue in Jordan today. One spatial tribute to the military is the Martyrs’ Memorial, which will be discussed in the fourth chapter. Due to deployment of colonial productions of culture and historical association with the Bedouin population, the government has managed to create a discourse of national identity that emphasizes

38 Massad, 214.
39 Ibid., 214.
what is presented as tribal traditions and customs, as well as military culture, as the ideal representations of national culture. Both the general public and people who identified as tribesmen have adapted this discourse. The section below explores how the disintegration of tribal structures laid the foundation for the emergence of tribal narratives that denationalize Palestinians and claim autochthony for the tribes.

Non-Government Discourses of a Tribalized National Identity

Although tribal identities remained salient, tribal structures and systems became less relevant as the Hashemite state grew stronger and took over more duties and responsibilities that had previously belonged to tribal sheikhs. In the first chapter, I discussed the politicization of tribal identities, meaning that tribal identities did not just connote communal identities of people having concrete social relations but became political identities that could be leveraged by certain groups and group leaders and the state. As Fathi noted, although political power rested to an extent with tribal elites at Transjordan’s inception in 1921, political power shifted more towards a bureaucratic elite as the state grew.40 With economic development came increased sedentarization and urbanization, meaning that Jordan now has very few truly nomadic tribes. According to Day, by the late 1970s, only 3% of Jordan’s population was nomadic compared to the 1922 population in which nearly half of Jordan’s population was nomadic.41 Kamel Abu Jaber argues that by the 1980s, social structures such as tribes and extended families had become replaced by nuclear families, interest groups, professional associations, and

---

40 Fathi, 26.
41 Day, 71; Massad, 46.
bureaucrats. Economic growth has led to the breakdown of the tribal system as power became more concentrated with individuals. Due to education as a leveler, individuals from politically weaker tribes have been able to join the bureaucracy and gain political power. The rise of the individual and the parallel rise of the middle class have weakened social divisions between the urban class, the Bedouin, and fellahin. One of the reasons why such a contentious debate about the role of tribalism emerged in the 1980s was that the new middle class began advocating for emphasis on merit, rather than tribal identity, in social and political life. For the new middle class, tribalism meant nepotism.

Despite the breakdowns in tribal structures, tribalism and tribal identities as political forces remained strong, to the extent that groups which lacked tribal histories began asserting themselves as tribes. One such group is the Circassians, a group of non-Arabs from Central Asia that established themselves in Jordan at the end of the nineteenth century but remains an ethnic minority. In 1979, some Circassians and Chechens established the Circassian-Chechen Tribal Council in order to increase access to state resources and transcend its minority status by using a discourse of tribal identity to participate effectively in the institutionalized patronage system. By doing so, the Council has imagined itself as a community in a radically new way. This development suggests that the Circassian-Chechen Council believed that in order to be taken seriously as legitimate Jordanians, they needed to form tribes rather than rely on their Jordanian citizenship alone. Although Jordan is a welfare state that aims to provide services such as

---

43 Fathi, 166-176.
education and health care to all, its political system is still highly personalized and discussions about using networks, which may not necessarily be kinship networks, to find jobs and resources remain highly contentious in popular discourses. With the loss of their political power, tribes needed to narrate themselves into significance. This occurred with the emergence of a tribal discourse of a tribalized national identity, which denationalized Palestinians and made claims of autochthony. By doing so, these tribesmen and narrators could claim a special relationship with the state that granted them political power, elevated their social standing, and gave them access to resources. These tribes’ discourse of tribalized national identity emerged at a particular historical moment to as a way to make up for particular communities’ increasing lack of political power.

Denationalization of Palestinians and Claims of Autochthony

Non-government discourses of tribalized national identity emerged in the 1980s when educated urban Jordanians of Bedouin origin began writing about tribal histories in order to nationalize them. By nationalizing their claims of genealogical origin and tribal heritage, these Bedouin scholars could reinforce their claims of autochthony and claim a special relationship with the Hashemite state. For example, they may choose to obscure resistance to Hashemite rule. Out of seventeen ‘Adwanis interviewed by Shryock, only five were willing to discuss the ‘Adwan revolt of 1923. Tribal historians used the state’s discursive mechanisms, such as written rather than oral history, to create a discourse of a tribalized national identity in which the tribes themselves are the true, rightfully dominant Jordanians. However, at the same time, tribal histories reveal the hegemony of tribes and thus may actually undermine the state-sponsored narrative of a homogenizing national

---

45 Day, 71.
46 Shryock, 303.
identity. As Layne argues, there is a dialogical relationship between tribal and national identity, meaning that there is a “constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning other.” Discourses of tribal identity and national identity interact and give meaning to each other and the ambiguities of such interactions will be discussed below.

Such claims of autochthony required the denationalization of Palestinians. Perhaps the most radical marker of Palestinian otherness consisted of tribes members’ references to Palestinians as ‘Belgians’ beginning in the 1980s. The origin of this epithet is unclear, but according to Massad, calling a Palestinian-Jordanian Baljikiyyih or Belgian is still used as a ‘national’ insult today. In his anthropological study of the Abbadi and Adwani tribes in the Balqa during the 1990s, Shryock writes that tribesmen commonly referred to Palestinians as Belgians as a way to claim tribal land and space from current Palestinian inhabitants. This epithet renders Palestinians foreign, despite their Jordanian citizenship, and removes even their Arab linguistic and cultural heritage. Thus, denationalizing and de-Arabizing Palestinians in this way undermined notions of Arab nationalism and Arab unity and the Jordanian government’s efforts to create a unified Jordanian national identity.

By painting Palestinians as foreign, Jordanians presenting themselves as members of tribes claimed autochthony for themselves. According to Shryock, a common statement among Bedouins in the Balqa region was “we are the people of the land (ahl al-

---

48 The term ‘Belgian’ could refer to Palestinian militias wearing Belgian-made boots compared to the Jordanian Army’s American wear or Transjordanians’ calls to ship off the Palestinians to Belgium during the 1970 war.
49 Massad, 253.
50 Shryock 59.
balad). The tribes. The original Jordanians (al-urduniyyin al-asaliyyin). We have lived in Jordan for ages, and the land is ours to this day.”

This emphasis on land is a reflection of the problematic relationship between notions of tribal identity and land. Although Bedouin tribesmen did not legally own the land of the Balqa, they claimed autochthony by referring to historical claims of land ownership. Shyrock notes that the majority of Bedouins in the Balqa are now sedentary, with jobs in the cities of Amman and Zarqa. In fact, the majority of inhabitants in the Balqa region are Palestinians who came to the East Bank in 1948 and in 1967 and there is also a large Palestinian refugee camp in the Balqa region. There are tensions between those who claim to be Bedouin and the Palestinian residents. When a Palestinian man interviewed by Shryock claimed to have a connection with the ‘Adwan tribe, an ‘Adwani tribesman told Shryock, “Don’t believe him. He’s a liar. What does he know about Bedouin? Nothing. He’s a Palestinian, not even from the tribes…They have no important history and they will only mislead you (Shryock) and waste your time.”

Palestinians’ supposed wealth, influence in government, and role in the civil war are emphasized in tribal discourses. One example of someone describing Palestinians from the position of an ‘authentic tribesman’ reveals an unsettling violent attitude: “They tried to kill our King. They wanted to rule over us, but we slaughtered them. Praise be to God.”

This discourse represents Palestinian militias as all Palestinians and by attempting to overthrow the Hashemite monarchy during the civil war, all Palestinians relinquished their right to consider themselves Jordanian. For the Bedouins in the Balqa in the 1990s, to be Jordanian was to be loyal to the Hashemites.

---

51 Shryock, 57.
52 Ibid., 50-57.
53 Ibid., 58-59.
54 Ibid., 72.
Another expression of denationalization of Palestinians that was required to make a claim of autochthony in tribal discourse is a tribal history written by Dr. Ahmad al-‘Uwaydi al-‘Abbadi, a well-known Jordanian historian and politician who was elected to Parliament in 1989. His election could be interpreted as evidence of his discourse’s popularity. Al-‘Abbadi hails from the Sikarna clan within the ‘Abbadi tribe and this aspect of his identity became salient during the election. According to Shyrock, al-‘Abbadi used his tribal identity to attack his opponents, also ‘Abbadi but from a different clan, and their sheikhly histories and historical dominance. But al-‘Abbadi does not seem to reject the very values that constitute tribalism. Instead, al-‘Abbadi continued to buy into the discourse of tribal identity by constructing a genealogical history that narrates the Sikarna clan into significance and power. In order for the Sikarna to be viewed as legitimately Jordanian, al-‘Abbadi needed to ensure that the Sikarna clan was viewed as autochthonous. Thus, despite oral histories of the Sikarna clan that indicate that they are originally a Palestinian clan from the West Bank, al-‘Abbadi argued in his various writings that the Sikarna are originally from the Hijaz and that they are descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.

The case of al-‘Abbadi indicates two important points. Firstly, the categories of ‘tribe’ and ‘clan’ are not static or hegemonic. Although nominally from the same tribe, al-‘Abbadi attacked his ‘Abbadi opponents’ origins. Clearly, al-‘Abbadi and his opponents have imbued the notion of ‘tribe’ with different meanings in order to gain political power and resources. Secondly, al-‘Abbadi wrote a history that differs from the oral history espoused by other members of his tribe. Not only was al-‘Abbadi one of the

---

55 Shryock, 24-25.
56 Ibid., 24.
first in his clan to fix oral genealogical histories in written forms, but he presented a new discourse about Sikarna history. Although the Sikarna and other tribal oral histories were also undoubtedly political, in that they obscure past sheikhs’ collaborations with the Ottomans, al-‘Abbadi’s discourse of Palestinian exclusion and tribal autochthony seems to be especially reflective of recent political developments with the Palestinians. By claiming that his clan was from the Hijaz and descendants of the Prophet, al-‘Abbadi used Hashemite discourses of legitimacy in order to increase his and his clan’s standing in a political system that is controlled by the Hashemites. This shows the Hashemite monarchy’s success in portraying themselves as authentically Jordanian, to the extent that others deploy Hashemite discourses of legitimacy to portray themselves as autochthonous. By doing so, groups asserting identities as tribes can assert a special relationship with the state that frames their privileged access to government resources. It is truly an amazing phenomenon that the Hashemites from the Hijaz created a discourse of autochthony that is seen by some as legitimate and is used to exclude the majority of Jordan’s modern-day population and to obscure the Palestinian origin of many Transjordanians.

Al-‘Abbadi not only painted himself and his clan as Hijazi rather than Palestinian, he also envisioned Jordan as an essentially ‘tribal nation’ without any Palestinian links. His discourse of Jordanian national identity is based on constructed genealogical links with the Hijaz and the noticeable lack of Palestinian ties. According to al-‘Abbadi’s views, only those Jordanians with long genealogical histories in the territory of Jordan or the Hijaz, i.e. the Bedouin tribes that were historically dominant in the south, could be
labeled authentically Jordanian.\textsuperscript{57} The notion of autochthony or nativeness is crucial to al-‘Abbadi’s construction of a Jordanian national identity.

In the 1990s, Palestinians responded to such prejudice with a discourse of belonging that intersects with notions of modernity.\textsuperscript{58} In an interview with Shryock, a Palestinian businessman living in the Balqa stated, “They are not important people, these Bedouin…We are the ones who built this country. When we came there, there was no civilization…[Bedouins] are still very close to savages.”\textsuperscript{59} This is an extremely different conceptualization of what it means to belong to Jordan. This identity is based on moving the country on an imaginary linear trajectory from being traditional, represented by rural Bedouins, to being modern, represented by urban Palestinians. In his statement of Palestinian belonging and subjectivity, the Palestinian businessman made no claims of genealogical ties to the land of Jordan but emphasized Palestinians’ modernizing accomplishments. According to him, one does not need to be autochthonous but one must be able to contribute to the state in order to be considered Jordanian.

\textit{Dialectic Narratives of National Identity}

According to Shryock, it seems that the emergence of non-government discourses of a tribalized national identity was a response to Hashemite-controlled discourses of national identity. Educated members of tribes used the Hashemites’ discursive methods such as writing textual histories in order to write narratives about their own tribes and, by extension, their own histories. Furthermore, oral histories indicate changing meanings of sheikhly authority. For example, Sheikh Khalaf in the ‘Abbadi tribe, despite referring to

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{57} Shryock, 272-275.
\textsuperscript{58} In this context, the notion of modernity evokes aspects of urbanization and economic advancement in a global economy dominated by the West.
\textsuperscript{59} Shryock, 72.
\end{flushleft}
himself as sheikh and as a reconciler of his fellow tribesmen, stated, “There are no sheikhs today.” This was a common statement among the sheikhs and tribesmen interviewed by Shryock because the Hashemite era is viewed as an age of law and order and state power at the expense of sheikhly power. By saying that modern-day sheikhs are not ‘true sheikhs’, the tribesmen that Shryock interviewed were referring to a ‘golden age’ of sheikhly power, when true sheikhs governed the land. For Haj ‘Arif, a sheikh in the Amamsha group interviewed by Shryock, a sheikh is someone who “slays whomever he desires to slay…He can lop off heads and the government will not interfere…But today they are all barnyard hens.” Precisely because the government would probably interfere in affairs between tribes, sheikhs have no role in Jordan today.

Yet many of the individuals who claim the disappearance of sheikhs still call themselves sheikhs. Clearly, there is power in discourses of sheikhly authority, which remained salient because the discourses framed an assertion of a special relationship with the state and state benefits. Sheikhs gained prestige by obtaining access to political circles of power controlled by the Hashemites and this prestige could be spread to the members of their tribes, thus reshaping the ideal sheikh in the Hashemite era. As Shryock

60 Shryock, 13.
61 Ibid, 55.
62 Jungen, 203. Jungen argues that tribalism remains politically salient in Karak because a Karaki is “first and foremost a tribal member and it is as such that he is defined by his own as well as by the outside world. He expects aid…from every member of his tribe who has been successful in achieving national prominence” (Jungen, 195). According to Jungen, elected Member of Parliament for Karak Abd al-Hadi al-Majali claimed descent from the great sheikh Muhammad al-Majali as a discourse of genealogical legitimacy (Jungen, 195-196). Therefore, it seems that Abd al-Hadi al-Majali took on the role and discourse of a trial sheikh in order to provide these services to his fellow tribesmen. Considering the great stature that sheikhs of the past had in both Karak and other areas in Jordan, a discourse of sheikhly authority had great power. As Jungen claims succinctly, the discourse of tribalism frames politics and political culture in Karak and “thus every notable, whether he has newly arisen within the traditional local hierarchy or not, will be judged in terms of his ability to appropriate tribal values and to locate himself within the tradition of the great sheikhs” (Jungen, 196). In order to be seen as legitimate in Karak, being elected wasn’t enough; representatives actually needed to present themselves as pseudo-sheikhs and refer back to histories and narratives of the age of sheikhs.
summarizes, by claiming a special relationship with the Hashemite state, Bedouin writers “force themselves and their fellow Bedouin into novel relationships with political identities that remain, in many respects, premodern, fragmentary, and ‘state-renouncing’.” In order to assert a relationship with the state, the writer can narrate his tribe into significance by recalling his tribe’s significance during the ‘age of sheikhs’ and writing history against past or present political insignificance. This can be read as a way of constructing tribal memory as national memory. Dr. al-‘Abbadi’s discourse of autochthony and denationalization of Palestinians was discussed previously as an example of such an assertion of significance. Glorifying and perhaps exaggerating the sheikhs’ past power, such as being able to behead people at will, is also part of this discourse. For example, according to Shryock, members of the ‘Adwani tribe do not usually mention the fact that some ‘Adwani sheikhs found it more beneficial to cooperate with the Ottoman authorities after 1869 and some sheikhs even became government officials. The age before Hashemite rule is not represented as an era of cooperation with, but resistance against the Ottoman Empire. Violent resistance against Ottoman officials and pashas are glorified. This trend in the Balqa is similar to Jungen’s findings in Karak. According to Jungen, the Ottoman Empire is only mentioned in oral accounts of the Ottoman period in order to show how the Ottoman authorities tried to take political power away from the tribes in Karak and how the tribes, especially the Majali tribe, resisted Ottoman rule. Majali sheikhs’ participation in the Ottoman government as tax collectors has been obscured. For example, the 1910 Karak revolt is an important

63 Shryock, 32.
64 Ibid., 79.
65 Ibid., 233.
66 Jungen, 199.
component of popular memory in Karak and “today serves to distinguish between a
Keraki and someone who could not lay claim to such an identity – particularly the
Palestinian population which has settled in Karak.”67 Thus, a discourse of political
resistance has become imbued with meanings of autochthony and glory in order to
elevate sheikhs’ social standing.

As a state authority, the Hashemite monarchy is not completely immune to being
a target of this discourse of resistance. Sheikh Rrefan al-Majali’s early indifference
towards Abdullah is also remembered with pride.68 Haj ‘Arif, the ‘Adwani sheikh who
called current sheikhs ‘barnyard hens’, tells the story of the ‘Adwan revolt in a way that
places Abdullah in a position of submission. His tale ends when Sherif Husayn
admonishes Abdullah for exiling Ibn ‘Adwan, the ‘sheikh of sheikhs’ of the ‘Adwan
tribe. According to Haj ‘Arif, Sharif Husayn said, “Those ‘Adwan were here before you.
You came here yesterday.”69 This statement highlights the ‘Adwan tribe’s resistance and
legitimizes their resistance because the ‘Adwan are supposedly more autochthonous than
Abdullah. Jordanian autochthony is a source of legitimacy in this discourse. Furthermore,
Shryock argues that the phenomenon of writing tribal histories can undermine the
Hashemite government’s discourses of national identity. These narratives of tribal
identity do not aim to unify Jordanians but showcase the differences between Jordanians.
Tribal historians actively resist a single narrative that applies to all Jordanians.70 While
the Hashemite government promotes a unified Jordan that obscures distinctions between
Jordanians and Palestinians and between different tribes with slogans such as “We are all

67 Jungen, 197.
68 Ibid., 199.
69 Shryock, 92.
70 Ibid., 315-316.
Jordanians,” different tribal histories promote an exclusive Transjordanian nationalism in which only certain Jordanians could be considered autochthonous Jordanians. But a narrative of a unified national identity would make members of tribes equal members of a national community. As Shryock summarizes, “State-sponsored nationalism serves to homogenize a social landscape that for the Balga tribes, is rich in essential contrasts.” But the Hashemites and tribal historians share discursive practices. Shryock argues that different discourses of Jordanian national identity have all been imbued with values of genealogical communities: The Hashemites claim legitimacy based on their descent from the Prophet Muhammad and some tribesmen assert that the belonging to the Jordanian nation is restricted to descendants of East Bank Bedouins.

However, as Jungen points out, tribal narratives do not necessarily undermine the state. Tribal discourses reflect both opposition to and support of government narratives. Since tribes refer to mythical or glorified pasts in their narratives, tribes can and do acknowledge the social reality of Hashemite political power. In fact, tribal leaders frame their work to access state benefits in terms of tribal pasts. A resident of Karak interviewed by Jungen stated, “The truth is that the tribes around here knew that they would never agree with each other…The solution, therefore, was the Hashemites – they came from the outside, so everybody is happy.” This man’s statement indicates that he has accepted the Hashemites as mediators between tribes and as legitimate leaders because they prevented tribal conflicts over leadership. Ironically, it seems that the Hashemites’ foreignness is the source of their legitimacy in this discourse. Another

71 Shryock, 74.
72 Ibid., 312.
73 Ibid., 321.
74 Jungen, 204.
75 Ibid., 205.
tribesman interviewed, Muhammad Hamdan of the ‘Adwan tribe, seems to also accept Hashemite legitimacy and interestingly, he uses the Hashemites’ discourse of national identity and claims that Jordan is one big family:

First we dominated the other tribes completely. A relation of strong to weak. Then we became like parts of a single body, with ‘Adwan at the head. Then dominance was taken by the government, and we all become, as they say, one family. King Hussein is the father of that big family.\(^76\)

Hashemite Discourse of Tribalized National Identity

There is a dialectic relationship between government and non-government discourses of tribalized national identity and it is unclear which discourse emerged first. But it is clear that discourses of tribalism provided the government with a framework by which to delineate Transjordanians from Palestinians. The need to create a uniquely Jordanian identity after Black September increased further with the emergence of Ariel Sharon’s ‘Jordan is Palestine’ discourse. Sharon became the Israeli Minister of Defense in 1981 and he claimed throughout the 1980s that all Palestinians in Israel could be transferred to Jordan because Jordan was just an Arab state repository for their fellow Arab Palestinians. In order for Jordan not be completely reimagined as a Palestinian state, which threatened the Hashemite monarchy, the Jordanian government to emphasize its uniqueness vis-à-vis the Palestinians.\(^77\) The government had previously invented or reinvented traditions in order to reinforce its discourse of a pan-Jordanian identity, as discussed in the second chapter. After the war, the Hashemite government embarked on a policy to reshape and perform supposedly Bedouin traditions as symbols of a common national heritage. As Fathi argues, discourses of tribal identity did not necessarily

\(^76\) Shryock, 303.
contradict official discourses of national identity: “By emphasizing the collectivity of tribes and integrating individual tribal identities into a broad category of tribal heritage…tribalism may serve as a source of shared history and a national symbol.”\textsuperscript{78} It is important to note that the Jordanian government still included ‘Palestinian traditions’ in its performances of a unified Jordanian national identity. For example, the government began promoting ‘folk cultures’ in order to showcase a long history for Jordan and such promotions included a display of Jordanian folk fashion from both the East and the West Bank in 1971.\textsuperscript{79} Nonetheless, discourses of Bedouin culture and tribalism became much more prevalent in public cultural spheres after Black September.

Programs about ‘Bedouin life’ were produced on television and radio and Bedouin songs also became much more popular, even outside Jordan, as representative of ‘Jordanian folk songs’. The Jordanian government also began promoting an image of the timeless Bedouin for tourist consumption. For example, according to Layne, Bedouins were the only Jordanians to appear in both government-produced and privately-produced tourism brochures during the 1980s. The brochures promoted ancient sites in places such as Petra, Wadi Rum, Jerash, Madaba, and Amman and the Desert Patrol in full ‘Bedouin’ regalia featured prominently. Furthermore, Jordanians dressed as Bedouins ‘stage authenticity’ in places for tourists such as hotels and prepare coffee and provide traditional dances for tourists.\textsuperscript{80} Other performances of tradition include the Jerash Festival, which showcased ‘traditional’ and ‘folkloric’ costumes and dances. Queen Noor, the fourth wife of King Hussein, usually attended wearing a gown that combined

\textsuperscript{78} Fathi, 210.  
\textsuperscript{79} Massad, 250.  
\textsuperscript{80} Layne, 102-103.
traditional embroidery patterns of different regions,\textsuperscript{81} which showed that Queen Noor was not only tribal but supra-tribal, a unifier of different tribes.

Exhibitions and displays of tribal artifacts also became more popular and according to Layne, exhibitions became a standard part of Jordanian life in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{82} The exhibition of tribal artifacts that Layne attended provided no contextual information for objects such as dishes of spices and jars of drained yogurt. Instead, these objects were presented as completely ordinary but, at the same time, worthy of display in an exhibition.\textsuperscript{83} These artifacts provide evidence that a national heritage existed and still exists; by displaying not one tribe but multiple tribes, tribal artifacts provide a display of a broad tribal identity and a shared source of pride. Layne calls Jordanian representations of national culture ‘mix-and-match’ because the Jordanian state has appropriated tribal, Circassian, and Palestinian symbols and customs to present a unifying Jordanian national heritage.\textsuperscript{84}

Furthermore, the Hashemite monarchy presented itself as mediators between ‘traditional’ tribalism and ‘modern’ urbanism, while identifying with the tribes as well. The Royal Court or diwan has a special department called the Tribes Council, which is responsible for maintaining relations between the Hashemites and different Bedouin tribes and still exists today. According to Fathi, “this Council emphasizes the King’s image as a patron-ruler and continues the tradition that Abdullah had established in dealing with the tribes in his function of a ‘supra-tribal’ leader.”\textsuperscript{85} In other words, the Hashemite kings used the discourse of tribal values and customs to frame their

\textsuperscript{81} Layne, 130.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 132.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 138-140.
\textsuperscript{85} Fathi, 127.
relationship of patronage with different tribal leaders. By doing so, the Hashemites were better able to integrate themselves into Jordanian society and to reframe their foreign origins by announcing themselves as the legitimate leading sheikhs of sheikhs. King Hussein also used a discourse of kinship when discussing Jordan. In his memoirs, he writes, “When I think of my family, I think with pride of everyone in Jordan…When I think of the tribe to which I belong, I look upon the whole Arab nation.” This quote shows that the Hashemites created a new discourse of legitimacy, one based on tribal identity and kinship with Jordanians. Therefore, it seems that the Hashemites too believed that only a tribal identity could be associated with true Jordanian autochthony. By reinforcing such a discourse of autochthony, the Hashemite monarchy endorsed a new Jordanian identity based on “east-Jordanian tribal and Islamic values, loyalty to the royal family and to the king’s army, and more pertinently, cleansed of Palestinian, pan-Arab and progressive ideologies.” The only sense of pan-Arabism allowed in this discourse was framed by the Hashemite monarchy.

Many Jordanians supported this new emphasis on a ‘revival’ of tribal values. One such supporter was newspaper columnist Musa Keilani. He approved of displays and performances of Bedouin traditions for tourists and he believed that many Jordanians living in Amman were proud of their Bedouin origins. According to him, the Bedouin lifestyle should be emulated as a “noble moral code.” Other Jordanian and Western scholars lamented the disappearance of Bedouin values from everyday life. But others opposed the vestiges of tribalism in political life. During the 1980s, debates emerged in

---

86 Hussein, Uneasy Lies the Head, 81; Quoted in Fathi, 128.
87 M.C. Hudson, Arab Politics, 210; Quoted in Fathi, 212.
88 Musa Keilani, Jordan Times, February 13, 1985; Quoted in Layne, 100.
89 Layne, 101.
Jordan about the roles of tribal values and tribal networks. One prominent opponent of tribalism was Marwan Muasher, a columnist who wrote for the English-language newspaper *Jordan Times*. In one article, he wrote that the government should not support tribal practices. He stated in an article, “I wish to see people proud because they are part of a professional organization, not because they are members of a big tribe…I wish to see people proud because they are Jordanians, not only because of their surnames.”\(^\text{90}\) In Muasher’s view, the prevalence of tribal identities hindered the development of a Jordanian national identity. In early 1985, the Parliament held a debate about the abolition of tribal law and Senator Rifa’i claimed that tribal laws were no longer compatible with the modern Jordanian state.\(^\text{91}\) But the Hashemite monarchy was not swayed. After the debate, King Hussein published a letter denouncing the ‘attacks’ on tribalism. He wrote,

> I would like to repeat to you what I have told a meeting of tribal heads recently that “I am Al-Hussein from Hashem and Quraish the noblest Arab tribe of Mecca which was honoured by God and into which was born the Arab Prophet Mohammad.” Therefore, whatever harms our tribes in Jordan is considered harmful to us.\(^\text{92}\)

The Hashemite monarchy called upon its own tribal heritage to legitimize discourses of tribalism and the patronage system which politicizes tribal identities. Hussein pledged to defend tribalism and the tribes of Jordan because historically, the Hashemite monarchy has relied on Bedouin tribes as a political pillar of support. There is a close association between the Hashemites and the Bedouins: the Hashemites are frequently mistaken for Bedouin (they are descended from a tribe but Abdullah and Hussein both grew up in urban areas) and even a notable scholar such as Day called the Hashemites Bedouin.

\(^\text{90}\) Marwan Muasher, *Jordan Times*, January 19, 1985; Quoted in Layne, 97.  
\(^\text{91}\) Layne, 104.  
Therefore, to rid Jordan of tribalism would mean dismantling the patronage system and undermining the Hashemites’ power. However, the Hashemite monarchy has recently shown signs of moving away from this discourse of a tribalized national identity due to the emergence of heterogeneous tribal narratives and histories, which as discussed previously, could potentially undermine a discourse of unified Jordanian identity.

Discourse of Islamic Legitimacy: Mosque-Building in Amman in the 1980s

Parallel to a discourse of tribalized national identity, the Hashemites also deployed a discourse of Islamic legitimacy. After 1967, the Jordanian government no longer had direct access to the holy sites in Jerusalem so the Hashemites needed a new Islamic discourse of legitimacy. Unlike the Hashemites’ discourse of Islamic legitimacy based on protection of Jerusalem in the 1960s, this discourse of Islamic legitimacy emerged in the 1970s with the rise of Islamism. According to Fathi, Islamist political candidates and organizations were very appealing to Palestinians and the Islamists won many seats in the 1989 elections,\(^{93}\) thus prompting the Hashemite regime to change the electoral law in 1991. Increasing Islamization was manifest in residents’ interest in building more mosques.\(^{94}\) Day argues, “What engages the attention and evokes the concern of Jordanians today is the appearance of an amorphous but very real movement back to Islam by many people from all levels of society.”\(^{95}\) This was perhaps Jordanians’ response to increasing Islamization around the Middle East and the Islamic world, ranging from the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran to increased popularity in wearing the hijab in Egypt. By investing in an Islamic heritage, the government could control the

---

\(^{93}\) Fathi, 228-229.
\(^{95}\) Day, 48.
narrative of Islamic legitimacy and undermine the growing Islamist opposition. According to Day, the Jordanian government has promoted Islam through different means. During the 1960s, the Islamist-headed Ministry of Education created a religious program for schools. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Holy Places allegedly subsidized women to wear religious dress.\(^96\) For the government, creating a narrative of Islamic heritage was a matter of domestic policy. Jordan lost vast sources of revenue in the West Bank and one of the government’s main sources of income was foreign grants and subsidies. Rogan claims, “As such subsidies flow largely from the Baghdad Pact pledges of Arab League states, it is in Jordan’s interests to reaffirm both its Arab and Islamic form.”\(^97\)

This discourse of Islamic legitimacy was also expressed visually through mosques. In the context of Islamism, Amman was increasingly criticized for lacking an organic identity. Due to the drastic increases in inhabitants, the municipality of Amman expanded westwards and demolished old souqs to decongest the historic downtown area.\(^98\) But reliance on Western urban planning methods meant that Amman’s distinct Circassian architecture became more obscure and its medieval Islamic sites, already in poor condition, were forgotten.\(^99\) In the face of increasing Islamization in the Arab and Muslim worlds, the Jordanian government decided to commit to a discourse of pan-Islamism and create an ‘Islamic’ architectural style for Amman. One way to do so was to increase the number of mosques in the city. In 1984, the government created a committee that was charged with providing guidelines for modern buildings to comply with Arab

---

\(^{96}\) Day, 48.  
\(^{97}\) Rogan, “Physical Islamization of Amman,” 38.  
\(^{98}\) Ibid., 29.  
\(^{99}\) Ibid., 27.
and Islamic architectural styles. The committee had three aims: raise awareness of architectural heritage, develop a school of Islamic architecture in Jordan, and bring both public and private architectural projects under government control and evaluation. But defining what Islamic architecture should be was more difficult than anticipated. Nonetheless, the government created discussion and, according to Rogan, “there is no indication that the government intends to ease its commitment to the goal of impressing on Amman a more regional and Islamic form.” While the government struggled to make the city more aesthetically Islamic, private organizations and individuals also funded a mosque-building boom. As of 1986, sixty-three of the ninety-eight dated mosques in Amman were built during the 1970s and early 1980s. Rogan argues that the combination of the mosque-building boom with the government initiatives “reflects a general will to make Amman more representative of its inhabitants’ religious and/or cultural heritage.” Note that the Islamization of Amman was not only initiated by the government but was also funded by private organizations and individuals. In fact, the majority of mosques in Amman was built by philanthropists and residents’ associations. Therefore, some Jordanians themselves had an interest in creating a unified Jordanian-Muslim identity that affirmed Jordan’s Islamic legitimacy. In the context of political Islamism personified by figures such as Ayatollah Khomeini, the Jordanian government and Jordanian individuals wanted to enhance Jordan’s position in the Arab and Muslim worlds through visual discourses of Islamic identity.

100 Rogan, “Physical Islamization in Amman,” 32.
101 Ibid., 32-34.
102 Ibid., 35.
103 Ibid., 35.
104 Ibid., 37.
105 Ibid., 30.
Conclusion

After the loss of Jerusalem and the civil war, the Hashemite monarchy’s discourse of a pan-Jordanian identity and its discourse of legitimacy based on protection of Jerusalem were no longer feasible. During the 1970s, the Jordanian government embarked on a project to promote Jordan’s tribal identity and the Hashemite monarchy appropriated the vocabulary of tribalism and kinship to express its relationship with the Jordanian people. Individuals identifying as members of tribes themselves reframed discourses of tribal identity in a way that made their own tribe distinct, autochthonous, and politically significant. But by narrating themselves into significance, these individuals highlighted the fractures of Jordanian society. As Jungen summarizes, the tribe can be a “conceptual framework, manipulated at leisure to offer an image of social organization traced from a mythic past but which, because of the demands of modernity, it can only imitate very imperfectly.”

Jordanian discourses of tribalism oscillate between the past and the present as proponents of tribalism refer back to the mythical or embellished past to enhance their political power in the present. Tribal identities can reflect genuine social relations and sentiments but they are also used as discourses to create social relations or engage sentiments of solidarity for political purposes.

The regime’s attempt to navigate the ambiguities of the discourse of a tribalized national identity will be discussed further in the fourth chapter, especially in the context of narratives of national identity in public space. The Hashemite monarchy is aware of the discursive power of tribalism and tribal identities and also of the potential for such claims of autochthony to delegitimize and denationalize the Hashemites. Therefore, the Hashemite monarchy actively appropriated a discourse of tribal identity in a way that

---

106 Jungen, 204.
represented the Hashemite monarchy as not only a tribe but a unifying force and a mediator between tribes. At the same time, as one of Shryock’s interlocutors pointed out, the Hashemite monarchy does not want tribal affairs to be emphasized in public spaces such as schools because it wants people to learn the history of the Hashemites: “They came from the Hijaz. They have a history of their own; they have ancestors and origins of their own, and that’s the history they want students to know about and admire.” After the Jordanian government officially severed all administrative ties with the West Bank in 1988, the government chose to focus more on Arab-Muslim unity and loyalty to King Hussein as the bases of a Jordanian national identity. The Hashemite monarchy also began showcasing both Jordan’s ancient history and its modernity as an attempt to create an image of hypermodernity in a context of neoliberal policies. Tribalism and tribal identities have been represented in some Jordanian and Western discourses as obstacles to this form of modernity but clearly, these discourses are politically and socially salient in a present that is emphatically modern or even hypermodern.

---

107 Shryock, 306.
108 Ibid., 318.
Museums, Monuments, and Downtown Amman: Spatial Discourses of National Identity

Introduction

In the previous three chapters, I discussed several discourses the Hashemite monarchy deployed to make claims about a Jordanian national identity and the legitimacy of the Hashemite regime to rule Jordan. The official discourses were based on notions of Arab nationalism, pan-Jordanianism, Islamic legitimacy, and tribalism. How and when the Jordanian government deployed these discourses was shaped by political and social contexts. These contexts include the annexation of the West Bank from 1948 to 1967, Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser’s attempts to undermine the Hashemite monarchy due to its pro-Western political stance during the 1950s and 1960s, Black September and the government’s policy of ‘de-Palestinization’ in the 1970s, and the growth of political Islamist movements beginning in the 1970s. It is also important to
note that ideologies of tribalism, Arab nationalism, and Islamic legitimacy were not static or monolithic or only given political power by the Jordanian government. Various interest groups framed their political agendas in different terms for a range of political and ideological purposes. This can be seen with the competition between Hussein and Nasser over who could be seen as the most legitimate Arab nationalist leader and the Jordanian Nationalist Movement’s adoption of Nasser’s Arab nationalist vocabulary to frame their opposition to the Jordanian government. The Hashemite monarchy itself shifted its discourse of Islamic legitimacy from one based on its lineage, previous status as protectors of Mecca, and its protection of Jerusalem’s holy spaces to one based on a visual Islamic identity and heritage in Amman.

This chapter will examine how these discourses were expressed in public space in Amman. Before engaging in this analysis, I will review conceptualizations of ‘space’ that have been at the heart of recent scholarship in history and the social sciences. According to Lefebvre, a space in which social interactions take place is just as analytically important as the social relations themselves. Lefebvre asks rhetorically, “Can space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations...The answer must be no.”1 Rather, a space contains ideology and meaning in and of itself. In fact, Lefebvre argues, ideology requires space in that ideology refers to places. Therefore, in Lefebvre’s words, “Ideology per se might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space.”2 As such, a space can shape social relations, just as a discourse not only reflects but shapes social relations. Soja adopts Lefebvre’s concept of space and argues that spatiality cannot be understood in isolation and apart from society and social

---

2 Lefebvre, 44.
relationships. Spatiality is a social product, i.e. space is shaped by social relations,\(^3\) which is slightly different from Lefebvre’s idea that space *shapes* social relations. This chapter will focus not just on the relationship between space and social relations but how *power* relations shape experiences of spaces.

Another important concept raised in this recent scholarship is the idea of ‘place’. Amireh defines a place as “a space with a meaning, [which] is comprised of a core and a physical context and…features which are enveloped with meanings, vocabularies and cues.”\(^4\) These meanings, vocabularies, and cues encourage users to adapt to the dominant ideology of the space or place, thus shaping behavior and social relations.\(^5\) The spaces examined in this chapter are all places. Furthermore, these places can be considered public spaces. A public space can refer to any place that is supposedly accessible to all - such as roads or parks - and are associated with places in which people gather. A public space’s potential for gathering usually has political connotations in popular conceptualizations of public spaces. For our study, it is useful to note Kilian’s argument that public and private are not characteristics of space but are expressions of power relations within spaces. Public spaces are not necessarily accessible to all. According to Kilian, who can access and who occupies public spaces is often determined by issues of physical security, cultural identity, and social/geographical community.\(^6\)

Lastly, there is contention between various groups of Jordanians about what kinds of experiences public spaces in Amman should provide. These conflicting ideas about public spaces are

---


\(^5\) Amireh, 152.

reflective of competing discourses about Jordanian national identity. An important aspect of this analysis is the consideration of public spaces as monumental spaces. An essential characteristic of monumental spaces, according to Lefebvre, is that a monumental space “offers each member of society an image of [his or her] membership, an image of his or her social visage.”7 In this context, a ‘social visage’ can also be thought of as a discourse of national identity present in monumental spaces.

Since the beginning of its rule in Jordan, the Hashemite monarchy has articulated various discourses of national identity. Due to changing political situations from the 1920s through to the 1980s, the Hashemite monarchy has shifted between discourses of Arab nationalism, pan-Jordanianism, Islamic legitimacy, and a tribalized national identity. These discourses were not mutually exclusive and they have been expressed in the same public spaces. In order to understand space as something more than an empty container or a blank page with just a message or dominant discourse written on it, we must understand the context of the space and, ideally, how the space is used.8 In this study, I will analyze the Hashemite monarchy’s spatial discourses of identity referred to in the Jordan Museum, the Martyrs’ Memorial, the King Hussein Park, and downtown Amman. I chose these places partly because of the wide range of time periods they represent: the Martyrs’ Memorial was inaugurated in 1977; the King Hussein Park opened in 2006; the Jordan Museum opened in 2013; and downtown Amman presents a range of spaces relating to the period from 1921 onwards. Furthermore, the Jordanian government sponsored all these places so they allow us to track shifts in official spatial discourses of national identity over time. In the 1920s, the Hashemite monarchy used

---
7 Lefebvre, 220.
8 Ibid., 94; Ibid., 142-143.
parades and spectacles as performances of legitimacy in downtown Amman. As discussed in the second chapter, during the early 1960s, the Jordanian government also used renovations and celebrations at the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as claims to Islamic legitimacy and pan-Jordanian national identity. After the 1967 war, the Jordanian government retreated from the West Bank and in 1970, Jordan became embroiled in civil war. The first time the government began to build monumental spaces in Amman was after Black September. The places discussed in this chapter can be read as the Hashemite monarchy’s efforts to express various sources of legitimacy in Amman to strengthen its rule. The monarchy also attempted to create a visual and spatial identity for Amman, which has been criticized for lacking an identity.9 By creating such an identity for the city, the Jordanian government has made physical, long-lasting claims of authority and has presented Amman, the stronghold of Hashemite power, as the rightful capital of Jordan. Another interesting aspect of the places under study, especially in the cases of the King Hussein Park and downtown Amman, is that the Jordanian government has propagated ideas about how the space should be used that are in tension with how the spaces are actually used. This suggests that the government’s vision of modern Jordanian public spaces and by extension, the government discourse of modernity are, if not contested, then viewed as incompatible with the majority of the residents in Amman.10

This chapter is organized by the analysis of the four places in turn and as much as possible, the chapter follows the chronological order of the historical periods on which

9 Scholars such as Eugene Rogan, Rami Daher, and Seteney Shami have discussed Amman’s lack of urban identity.
10 In this context, modernity refers to the social phenomena associated with the rise of the nation-state and the rise of capitalism, including urbanization and the emergence of a bourgeoisie that is interested in political reform. Modernity can also refer to intensified flows of people, capital, goods, and information.
the spatial discourses of national identity draw. I will first analyze the Jordan Museum (opened in 2013), then the Martyrs’ Memorial (1977) and the King Hussein Park (2006) as monumental spaces, and finally, downtown Amman as a site of competing discourses of modernity. The Jordan Museum, the Martyrs’ Memorial, and the King Hussein Park all feature references to the past as part of a discourse of national identity. The Jordan Museum was not fully opened at the time of my visit so the analysis of the museum focuses on its exhibits of ancient history and the appropriation of ancient history as Hashemite history. At the Martyrs’ Memorial, the focus is on the period from the Arab Revolt in 1917 onwards and the museum timeline stops before 1967. These events are highlighted as expressions of discourses of Arab nationalism and Islamic legitimacy but a newer discourse of Jordanian national identity based on ancient sites such as Petra can also be seen at the Memorial. The King Hussein Park presents the Jordanian government’s first attempt to represent the whole history of the territory of Jordan from the Paleolithic period to the modern-day as one coherent narrative. Therefore, the Hashemite monarchy draws on all sources of legitimacy and discourses of national identity previously discussed to assert its authority in this space. The Hashemite Court and Hashemite Plaza in downtown Amman differ from the other places analyzed in this chapter because they showcase the Jordanian government’s hyper-modernist discourse about the future of Jordan, rather than the government’s visions of Jordan’s past. Although the Jordan Museum and the King Hussein Park do not make explicit references to this discourse of hyper-modernity, they are both located in spaces in which this discourse of modernity is expressed and contested.

11 The chapter is not in perfect chronological order as there are various referrals to multiple historical periods at each place and not all the public spaces express narratives about the same period.
The Jordan Museum

The Jordan Museum opened in 2013 after a decades-long planning process. The museum combines representations of the ancient past, tribal life, and modern Jordan to create a coherent narrative of Jordan’s long and glorious history with Hashemite rule as its pinnacle. Placed in the context of museum-building in Jordan, the museum can be viewed as the culmination of the government’s efforts to create an imagined national community. This was done by moving from a folkloric approach to museum displays in older museums to a showcase of ‘national’ history at the Jordan Museum.

In her study of the participation of women in Jordanian museums, Malt asked several of her Jordanian interlocutors, many of whom were female curators or involved in the profession, what they thought museums were. According to Malt’s respondents, museums in Jordan were synonymous with antiquity. Most respondents thought of museums as collections of ‘old things’. Others noted the potential of museums to “recover a sense of belonging to local history and traditions,” and found that they “give you nostalgia for the past” and “what they want to present of themselves.” The latter statement is especially interesting because it touches on the discursive practices of museums. By making claims of ownership of the past, museums appropriate artifacts into a narrative of national history and national identity. To use Lefebvre’s insight, museums present to members of society an image of their membership by creating a narrative of a continuous national history. The Jordanian government has placed some importance on museums as a way to disseminate the values and narratives of national history. Most museums are free to Jordanian students (and some are free to all Jordanians).

---

12 Carol Malt, Women’s Voices in Middle East Museums: Case Studies in Jordan (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), viii.
13 Malt, 23.
visits are also a core component of the Jordanian school curriculum,\textsuperscript{14} indicating that the Jordanian government actively encourages and expects students to visit museums.

\textit{The ‘Folkloric’ Approach to Museums}

Most of the museums in Jordan were established in the 1970s or later. According to Maffi, a ‘folkloric’ approach dominated the way objects were displayed in Jordanian museums. This approach, as Maffi argues, involved creating a sense of unity through the erasure of local differences.\textsuperscript{15} Museums outside of Amman in cities such as Salt or Ma’an were rarely built to showcase local history; instead, the exhibits and displays at these museums were usually about Hashemite history. For example, at the time of Maffi’s visit in the early 2000s, the only exhibit at the museum in Ma’an that applied specifically to Ma’an was one about the Hijaz Railway, which had a stop at Ma’an. There was no discussion of life in Ma’an before or during the Ottoman period.\textsuperscript{16}

During the early 1970s, the ‘folkloric’ approach to museum planning included examples of Palestinian folk culture, such as embroidery, as mentioned in the third chapter. For example, the Museum of Popular Traditions was established in 1971, only one year after Black September. According to the Jordan Tourism Board, the museum’s aims are to “collect Jordanian and Palestinian folk heritage from all over Jordan, to protect and conserve this heritage and to present it for future generations. The museum is also concerned with introducing our popular heritage to the world.”\textsuperscript{17} The museum contains ‘traditional’ costumes from the East Bank and the West Bank, terms that are still


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 215.

\textsuperscript{17} Jordan Tourism Board, \textit{Museums}, http://international.visitjordan.com/Wheretogo/amman/Museums.aspx.
used in the touristic description of the museum today,\textsuperscript{18} as well as a collection of Byzantine mosaics from Jerash and Madaba. According to Maffi, the museum was founded to promote reconciliation between Palestinians and Jordanians by focusing on common rural customs and erasing representations of urban cultures of both banks from the museum.\textsuperscript{19} This phenomenon of erasing urban culture from discourses of national identity is not limited to museums but has developed alongside discourses of a tribalized national identity. Since urban areas in Jordan are often places where Palestinians form the majority of the population and are usually sites of civil disobedience, rural areas have become symbols of national identity in official discourse.\textsuperscript{20} As Maffi summarizes, “The Bedouin culture is regarded as the core of Jordanian identity and at the same time the Palestinian component, which is represented as mainly rural, is integrated into Transjordanian national traditions.”\textsuperscript{21} Along with the flattening of local differences, folkloric museums’ privileging of rural culture implied that only Bedouin culture was worth displaying and including in historical narratives. But this Bedouinization or tribalization of discourses of national identity shifted again in 1988. Jordan officially disengaged from the West Bank and the Hashemite monarchy began establishing museums of modern history focused on Hashemite history, rather than on local traditions.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{18} Jordan Tourism Board, \textit{Museums}.
\textsuperscript{20} Furthermore, most residents of urban areas are migrants or descendants of migrants. Thus, the idea of ‘being from Amman’ is considered strange or even rejected in popular and official discourses (Kassay, 260; Kassay, 265-67).
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 154.
The ‘National’ Approach to Museums

The Jordan Museum is the first museum that combines ancient artifacts and modern history to present a unified narrative of national history. During the late 1970s, Jordanian government officials recognized the need for a museum to display Jordanian national history and culture. But the museum languished in the development and planning stages for over twenty years, as officials debated the location and the contents of the museum. Finally, the government decided to build the museum in Ras al-‘Ain, a neighborhood located between the downtown area and Abdali, which the Jordanian government hopes to remodel as the new downtown area. Ras al-‘Ain is part of a phenomenon of urban restructuring according to the government’s vision of modernity. The Jordan Tourism Board website describes Ras al-‘Ain as the “dynamic new downtown area.” According to Malt, the aim of building the museum in Ras al-‘Ain was to connect the museum to the downtown area and to “retain the special character of the cityscape.” These statements show that the government is attempting to negotiate the existing ‘special character’ of the cityscape, as represented by the old downtown, with a new type of urban space that is based on this version of modernity, or hyper-modernity.

By building the museum close to downtown, the museum serves as a bridge between discourses of tradition and modernity. The whole area of Ras al-‘Ain includes the museum, City Hall, and the Al-Hussein Cultural Center, all of which were built in the late 1990s or later. Ras al-‘Ain is a new site of performances and spatial discourses of national identity developed by King Abdullah II, which will be discussed further in the contexts of the King Hussein Park and downtown Amman. Despite the government’s

---

23 Malt, xxix-xxx.
24 Jordan Tourism Board, Museums.
25 Malt, xxxi.
image of the dynamism of Ras al-‘Ain, the neighborhood does not seem to be bustling; it seemed rather empty during my visit to the museum, City Hall, and the cultural center. Like Martyrs’ Memorial, these places occupy large open spaces, which are rare in Amman and increase the sense of monumentality of these places (Figure 1). But I did not see casual users of these open spaces because these spaces do not seem to be transitory. In this context, transitory means that there were not any people wandering around or using the spaces as gathering places, perhaps due to the lack of shops and restaurants. Rather, users are likely to travel to Ras al-‘Ain with a specific purpose and/or destination in mind.

(Figure 1. Exterior of the Jordan Museum. Source: By Freedom's Falcon (Arabic Wikipedia) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons)

In this context, many of the visitors I saw during my visit were Western tourists, rather than Jordanians, perhaps because the museum just began its partial opening in 2013 with very limited hours so not many Jordanians were aware of the museum’s opening. Unlike other museums in Amman, the Jordan Museum seemed modern, clean,

---

26 A potential reason for the lack of bustle is that I visited on a Saturday so City Hall would be largely empty. However, I assume that museums receive more visitors on weekends than on weekdays.

27 Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are property of the author.
and well-lit. The museum made use of technology and had informative plaques, which are lacking in most museums in Amman. The museum is rated the third best attraction in Amman on Trip Advisor and reviews are generally very positive, citing the museum’s wealth of information and interactive activities. One resident in Amman described how, considering the quality of other museums in Amman and the rest of Jordan, the museum was a surprise to her: It was spacious, clean, well-lit, informative, and interactive. Only the first floor was open at the time of my visit and I was able to visit exhibits about Petra, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the ‘ancient’ period. One of the rooms on display was also a ‘traditional’ Bedouin space. The sign for the second floor indicated that exhibits would include information about the Islamic periods, ‘traditional’ heritage, and modern Jordan.

Similarly to the King Hussein Park that will be discussed below, the museum reinforces a discourse of national history that is based on an unbroken timeline from the Neolithic period to the present. One of the educational graphics on display was a map showing Jordan’s trade relations from 3500 to 1200 BCE (Figure 2). This map shows ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and Egypt without borders. But the modern borders of Jordan are drawn on the map with the title ‘Jordan’. Rather than use the names of the civilizations present in the territory of Jordan during the Bronze Period, the museum imposed the anachronistic name and territorial borders of modern Jordan on a representation of ancient history. By visually connecting ancient history and the modern Hashemite state of Jordan, the Hashemite monarchy claims ownership of that ancient history. The museum thus appropriated ancient artifacts and history found in the territory of modern Jordan into a Hashemite-dominated narrative of Jordanian history.

---

The Jordan Museum serves to appropriate ancient civilizations for a discourse of national identity and history and disseminates this discourse through such maps, graphics, and plaques of information. Other symbols of ancient history appropriated are Petra and the Dead Sea Scrolls. One of the plaques at the museum claims that the Petra exhibit “aims to link young Jordanians with their national heritage.” The Dead Sea Scrolls are also given a prominent position within the museum even though the scrolls were found in the West Bank. During the period of Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank, the scrolls were also highlighted in Jordan’s exhibits at world fairs. The inclusion of the scrolls in the museum
indicates that the Jordanian government is still willing to claim Palestinian artifacts and display a visual discourse of pan-Jordanian national identity for the purposes of tourism.

(Figure 3. Bedouin Exhibit.)

One of the most interesting displays at the museum is the ‘traditional’ Bedouin space (Figure 3). Set against a backdrop of an unidentified desert, the exhibit features rugs, cushions, cooking utensils, and instruments representative of Bedouin life. By putting representations of Bedouin life on display, the museum placed this type of life firmly in the past. At the same time, this exhibit was the only one at the time that presented lifestyles of any group of local Jordanians. Therefore, it seems that, according to the museum, the Bedouins are the only Jordanians worth representing as historically relevant and making representative of all Jordanians. The Jordan Museum negotiates two discourses that seem contradictory: a discourse of tribal autochthony and a discourse of modernity that paints tribalism as anti-modern. Similarly, the Jordanian government draws on a set of potentially conflicting discourses of national identity. The Hashemite monarchy still uses a discourse of kinship and tribalized identity to describe the Jordanian
nation, calling Jordan one big tribe or family, but at the same time has embarked on a project of neoliberalism that imagines Jordan, particularly Amman, as a locus of global modernity. Perhaps the most fascinating thing about the Hashemite monarchy is that it is able to project these different discourses at the same time in the same places.

The Martyrs’ Memorial

Inaugurated in 1977, the Martyrs’ Memorial is one of the first Hashemite-sponsored monumental spaces not only in Amman but in Jordan. The memorial does not gesture towards the ancient past but creates a spatial timeline focusing on the Arab Revolt (1916-1918) and military victories over Israel in the 1960s. By creating such a timeline, the Jordanian government expresses discourses of national identity framed in terms of Arab nationalism and Islamic legitimacy in order to portray the Hashemite monarchs as legitimate rulers of Jordan. The Arab Revolt, according to Layne, constitutes one of the main aspects of Jordan’s official discourse of collective memory and national history.29 The annexation of the West Bank is also represented as ‘protection’ of Palestinians in the name of Arab nationalism. What is interesting is what is not emphasized at the memorial: mandatory rule, the 1967 war, and Black September. These periods and events could threaten the monarchy’s narrative of the Hashemites being the legitimate and natural rulers of Jordan. A reference to ancient history in the form of images of the Hashemite kings superimposed on an image of Petra indicates an emerging narrative of ancient history appropriated as Hashemite history. This narrative is also seen at the Jordan Museum and the King Hussein Park.

The memorial is located at the top of a hill in the Sports City complex in the affluent Shmeisani district in northwestern part of Amman. The Martyrs’ Memorial is an imposing sight. It is a white stone cube with a black frieze of Qur’anic inscription running around the memorial (Figure 4). The austere cuboid structure of the memorial resembles the ka’aba, the cuboid that is the most sacred site in Islam and is located in Mecca, the destination of the holy pilgrimage. Therefore, the physical architecture of the Martyrs’ Memorial can be read as a visual part of the Hashemites’ discourse of Islamic legitimacy, which will be discussed further below. In order to enter the memorial, you must cross a stone courtyard, where military tanks are on display and you must walk up a flight of stone steps surrounded by Jordanian flags. Vast, empty, open spaces such as the courtyard of the memorial are rarities in Amman, which is characterized by busy streets and roads, rather than any open spaces. Big outdoor places such as Sports City and the King Hussein Park are mostly located in western Amman, which is more affluent than the eastern side of Amman.

(Figure 4. Exterior of Martyrs’ Memorial. Source: Preston Quinn)
The interior of the building is a large, dark space with twenty-four large flags hanging in the lobby, creating an atmosphere of majestic solemnity. The structure of the memorial is such that visitors must literally walk through a timeline of Jordan’s history at the museum before visiting the memorial itself. The monarchy’s and military’s versions of history are physically manifest in this timeline. This version of Jordanian history begins with the Arab Revolt led by the Hashemites and its kings are literally this history’s markers: Individual exhibition cases with the kings’ pictures mark the eras of their reigns. Cases are devoted to the kings’ belongings such as walking sticks, uniforms, and books, rather than representing the contested parts of Jordan’s history such as the 1967 War or Black September. This speaks to the image that the monarchy was trying to portray: The kings are paternal figures who led a stable country without internal divisions. The presence of the kings’ belongings almost create an atmosphere of worship, implying that even the kings’ belongings are important to the country. Each image of the king is accompanied by his copy of the Holy Qur’an, a reminder that the kings were not only pious but had religious legitimacy as descendants of the Prophet. Apart from the kings, very few individuals are named. As the author of this narrative, the Hashemite monarchy can erase political opposition to the monarchy from its narratives of national history and identity. This flattening of history further propagates the discourse that

---

30 This is a trend in other Jordanian museums as well. According to Maffi, the Museum of Political Life in Amman, which is devoted to King Abdullah, “ensures that the monarchy is the political and ideological center which alone can organize the past in order to guarantee [the monarchy’s] own existence. In light of such principles, other actors in history must play a secondary role” (New Museographic Trends, 213). However, there is a place in the museum for those who participated in the Arab Revolt and were not Transjordanian by descent but later moved to Transjordan under Abdullah’s rule. Maffi argues that emphasis on this originally foreign group is an “allegorical personification of the situation of the majority of the Jordanian citizens and of the royal dynasty itself” (213). As discussed in the third chapter, some tribal discourses of autochthony that emerged in the late 1980s defined autochthony as being from the Hijaz and not as Palestinian origins. By painting Jordanian citizens of non-Transjordanian origin as role models, the Jordanian government propagates a model citizen who is similar to the Hashemite monarchy, thus ironically creating a discourse of national identity based on foreignness.
Hashemite history is Jordanian history and Hashemites can legitimately represent Jordanians. Here, what Anderson said about official discourses of national identity rings true: “The Hashemites are Jordan; Jordan is the Hashemite family.” According to this spatial discourse of national identity, Jordanian history is represented as Hashemite history and any reference that threatens the Hashemites’ ‘natural’ right to rule Jordan, such as British colonial officials and Palestinian-majority opposition forces, are noticeably absent.

The memorial itself is devoted to fallen Jordanian soldiers. Somehow, this process of devotion serves to further the glorification of the Hashemite monarchy by dramatizing the Hashemites’ role in the 1916-1918 Arab Revolt. At the memorial, there is a whole section dedicated to the Arab Revolt with windows displaying military paraphernalia from the revolt and photos of emirs Faisal and Abdullah with Arab soldiers. The Arab Revolt occurred in World War I and predates the modern state of Jordan. But the revolt was constructed as a part of Jordanian history at the memorial because the revolt can be read as a way of legitimizing the Hashemites’ role as Arab nationalist leaders and thus legitimate rulers of Jordan.

What is emphasized at the Martyrs’ Memorial is the Hashemites’ dedication to Arab nationalism, evoked here through their leadership of the Arab Revolt and the monarchy’s protection of Palestinians from Israel in 1948. Labeling this discourse pan-Jordanian may be incorrect because there are few references to Palestinians being a natural part of the Jordanian state. But this discourse differs significantly from the discourse of national identity based on notions of East Bank tribalism discussed in the

---

32 Malt, 35-36.
third chapter. The Jordanian government could not afford to give up on the ideology of Arab nationalism completely during the late 1970s. Inflation was high and in 1979, Bedouin groups, usually thought of as the most loyal to the Hashemite monarchy, marched on the capital.\textsuperscript{33} In a context of trade relations and aid from other Arab states, it was in the Jordanian government’s interest to construct a large monument devoted to the Hashemites’ and Jordanians’ sacrifices for Arab causes. Furthermore, notions of Arab and Muslim unity were less politically controversial to other Arab states than the discourse of pan-Jordanianism.

Another important discourse of Hashemite legitimacy present in the Martyrs’ Memorial is based on Islamic legitimacy. Exhibition cases with the Hashemite kings’ images literally mark the spatial timeline so that Jordanian history is read in terms of the kings’ reigns. Each of these windows contains the king’s personal copy of the Qur’an.\textsuperscript{34} Along with the memorial’s ka’aba-like structure and the references to the Hashemites’ connections with the Holy Land, the Martyrs’ Memorial reminds visitors that the Hashemites were once protectors of Mecca and Jerusalem. According to this discourse, the Hashemite monarchy’s religious credentials make them suitable and legitimate rulers of Jordan.

These discourses of legitimacy require the erasure of political groups who threaten the Hashemite narrative of authority. These groups are the British mandatory government that created the state of Transjordan and Palestinians, despite most Palestinians’ lack of involvement in Black September. Only in the context of the Arab

\textsuperscript{33} Schirin Fathi, \textit{Jordan – An Invented Nation?} (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1994), 188-189.

\textsuperscript{34} The display of the Hashemite kings’ personal items seems to be a trend in Jordanian museums. The Islamic Museum, located at the King Abdullah mosque complex in Amman, showcases King Abdullah’s personal items alongside ancient artifacts (Malt 35), thus reinforcing this sense of a continuous Jordanian history running from ancient civilizations to the modern Hashemite monarchy.
Revolt are the British mentioned for their support of the Hashemite military actions against the Ottoman Empire. Military officers (including Arab and Jordanian officers) remain unnamed, keeping the main attention on the monarchy. The mandate period is similarly underemphasized. John Glubb is only named once, despite his important role in recruiting Bedouin tribesmen into the Desert Patrol,\(^{35}\) as discussed in the first chapter. However, the tribes’ loyalty to Glubb came at the expense of then-emir Abdullah’s control of them.\(^{36}\) In the spatial context of a dedication to the military, it is especially significant that Glubb, the former Commander of the Arab Legion, is absent. At the Martyrs’ Memorial, the only political power associated with the military is the Hashemite monarchy. In fact, Britain is not mentioned outside of giving the Hashemites weapons. Thus Britain’s power over Abdullah and Jordan’s colonial past is downplayed. The lack of information about Britain’s role in the creation of Transjordan and its relationship with Abdullah at the memorial serves to prevent any counter-narrative to the monarchy’s discourse of national history. The history of Jordan presented at the memorial implies that Jordan has ‘natural’ boundaries and its history ‘naturally’ culminated in Hashemite rule.

Parts of Jordan’s history that are also absent at the Martyrs’ Memorial are moments of resistance against the Hashemite monarchy, especially by Palestinians. According to the plaques at the museum, the military performed their duty to protect Palestine during the 1948 War. There are no hints of Abdullah’s secret talks with Israel and the Arab Legion’s suspicious conduct during the war, such as retreating from some areas in Palestine that would not become Jordanian territory, as discussed in the second chapter. Throughout the whole museum, ‘Palestinians’ are portrayed as victims of Israel

---

\(^{35}\) John Glubb established the Desert Patrol in 1931. Part of the Arab Legion, the Patrol’s main duties were to protect Transjordan’s borders.

who needed Jordan’s protection (Figure 5). In the exhibits for this time period, Israel is referred to vaguely in the informational plaques as ‘the enemy’ that threatened the whole Arab world, an implicit justification of Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank. There is no mention of the conflicts with Palestinian nationalists and later on militias who were forced out of Jordanian territory in Black September. Apart from Palestine’s status as the Holy Land, Palestinian territory and particularly Palestinians are notably absent from this version of Jordan’s history and national identity in the period of 1948 to 1970.

(Figure 5. Display of Karameh Battle of 1968, during which Palestinian militias and Jordanian military units inflicted heavy losses on the Israeli military. This display is one of the few mentions of Palestinians at the memorial and reinforces Jordanian heroism. Source: Preston Quinn)

The Palestinian who assassinated King Abdullah is represented but remains unnamed; he is not even identified as Palestinian. The only reference to Abdullah’s death reads, “The great man fell in the Holy City.” Even an event that is clear evidence of Palestinian opposition to Jordanian annexation is represented in such a way to strengthen the link between Jordan and the Holy Land, in order to strengthen Hashemite legitimacy.
The failure of Jordan to ‘protect’ the West Bank from Israel’s occupation after the 1967 War is also omitted. For this failure is a challenge to the legitimacy of the Jordanian state. The Hashemite monarchy had claimed to be the protector of Palestinians so if Jordan could not protect or represent Palestinians, then what was Jordan’s role in the Arab world? This dilemma also helps explain the absence of Black September at the memorial. By supporting Palestinian militias as opposed to the Jordanian government and engaging in violence against the Jordanian state, some Palestinians and Jordanians themselves questioned Jordan as the legitimate representative of Palestinians. Although the memorial is dedicated to the military, which has been ‘de-Palestinized’ as discussed in the second chapter, the official discourses present at the memorial actually seem to be based on notions of Arab nationalism rather than that of an exclusive Transjordanian one. However, in this space, the government undoubtedly silences Palestinian voices.37

Finally, there is another visual discourse of Hashemite legitimacy present at the memorial that does not seem to be based on pan-Islamic legitimacy but on Jordan’s own cultural heritage. In the lobby, there is a large poster composed of photos of the five Hashemite leaders from Sherif Husayn to King Abdullah II superimposed on images of Petra and the King Abdullah Mosque (the current national mosque). This poster was added after the memorial was built and indicates a shift from a pan-Islamic discourse of legitimacy to an emphasis on national, secular sites. There is focus on national territory, as national homeland is mentioned a few times in the Arabic brochure and the martyrs are referred to as ‘sons of Jordan’. In order to construct this national homeland, the Jordanian government emphasized Petra as a symbol of Jordan’s ancient history. By visually

37 Palestinian voices were already silenced when the Hashemite monarchy appropriated Jerusalem’s holy places to form a discourse of pan-Jordanian identity based on ideas of Islamic legitimacy.
connecting the Hashemite monarchy and Petra, the poster implies that the monarchy has inherited Jordan’s great and ancient history. The memorial presents shifts in official discourses of national identity and Hashemite legitimacy over time. When the memorial was built, the Hashemite monarchy wanted to emphasize the Hashemites’ legitimacy as leaders of the Arab Revolt, protectors of Palestinians, and descendants of the Prophet. But after King Abdullah II ascended the throne, the discursive meaning of the space changed with a visual narrative of Jordanian history intertwined with the Hashemite monarchy, rather than relying on discourses of Arab nationalism or pan-Islamic legitimacy as a way to justify Hashemite rule.

The King Hussein Park

Located near the eighth circle, which was formerly the westernmost part of Amman, the King Hussein Park opened in 2006, although construction continued throughout 2007. The park is notable for its combination of ancient history with modern Hashemite rule to create a unified historical narrative. By referring to the great civilizations of Jordan’s past, the park creates a new discourse of legitimacy for the Hashemite monarchy, in that the Hashemite kings can be read as descendants of these civilizations. The Historical Passageway, which is a spatial timeline of Jordan’s history, expresses almost all the sources of legitimacy that the monarchy draws upon, from ancient history to Arab nationalism to Jerusalem to Islamic legitimacy. I will analyze

---

38 One of the main throughways in Amman is Zahran Road, which runs east to west from First Circle (near the historical downtown) to the newer Eighth Circle. These circles have become landmarks in Amman and are spatial markers of different districts.

displays and objects in chronological order of the periods they refer to but this order does not necessarily correspond to the order by which visitors can experience the park.

The park can be considered an example of how King Abdullah II, the son of Hussein who ascended to the throne in 1999 following his father’s death, has sought to create the eighth circle, as opposed to the historical downtown, as one of the centers of his discourse of national identity. The park’s location by the eighth circle evokes neoliberal values. The park is surrounded by the King Hussein Business Park, Mega Mall, City Mall, and other manifestations of the neoliberal economic program. Neoliberal economic policies, which are based on the notion of competition, have led to intensified privatization and the development of luxury projects as a way to create an appropriate image of hypermodernity to attract foreign investors. The eighth circle has become a new site of performances of national identity and the King Hussein Park is instrumental to the current Hashemite king’s discourse of hypermodernity that is circulated as a vision of Jordan’s future. The relationship between discourses of modernity and national identity will be discussed in this section.

The park is difficult to reach, especially for residents in the less affluent eastern Amman, because the eighth circle is near the city’s western limits, far west of downtown. Thus, although the park should be accessible to all, invisible barriers to access based on class dimensions are present at the park. As Figure 6 demonstrates, the distance from King Hussein Mosque at the park to the Roman Theater in downtown is approximately 40


41 Hypermodernity usually refers to an intensified modernity. In the case of Jordan, I use hypermodernity to mean a modernity that evokes neoliberal values, i.e. greater role of the private sector in the economy and in public life and an increase in spaces of consumption.
sixteen kilometers, which is considered a long distance in a city such as Amman. Therefore, users would likely need to drive or take a taxi to the park, thus limiting who would be able to access the park in terms of socioeconomic class. The dotted line on the left in Figure 6 shows the city limits.

(Figure 6. Map of Amman showing route from King Hussein Mosque to Roman Theater. Source: Google Maps, accessed February 28, 2014)

The park itself is a vast space at 700,000 square meters, and is considered one of the only green spaces in Amman or ‘Amman’s favorite green space’ in tourist parlance. Aside from open space, the park also encompasses the King Hussein Mosque, which was inaugurated in 2006 as the new national mosque, the Royal Automobile Museum, the Children’s Museum, representations of the Hijaz Railway, a Levantine townhouse, a Roman amphitheater, and the Historical Passageway. However, these sites can be difficult to find due to the lack of signage in the park and the multitude of winding paths. Many areas of the park were also surrounded by fences, which limited movement. For

---

example, the Historical Passageway, a 488-metre wall and promenade, is fenced off on both ends of the promenade (Figure 7).

(Figure 7. The fences around the Historical Passageway.)

When I visited the mosque, I saw mostly women with their children, as well as young couples making use of secluded spaces. A notable Jordanian blogger described similar users when he visited the park in 2007, although he noted that the park was supposed to be full of families during the summer. From my observations, users mostly took advantage of the open spaces to sit and chat. I did not see anyone else engaging with the Historical Pathway. It is unclear if the Jordanian government wanted to target a certain segment of the population but it is clear that the users of the park do not represent the diversity of Jordan’s population. It is also unclear whether visitors normally stroll towards the passageway and engage with it casually. According to the website Jeeran, which allows residents to review places in their cities, the King Hussein Park scored four out of five stars from 154 reviews. Reviewers generally praised the park’s beauty,

45 Tarawneh, *King Hussein Park & Mosque.*
cleanliness, and open spaces. But some users criticized the lack of organization, the
distance from the city, and the *shabab* (youths) hanging around the park; for one user,
these youths infringed on a family space. It seems that most users were more interested
in using the park’s open public spaces than to learn more about Jordan’s ancient history.

During my walk through the park, I passed by representations of the Hijaz
Railway, a ‘typical’ townhouse in the Levantine style, and a Roman-style amphitheater
(Figure 8). These displays also lacked signs, indicating that these displays are spatial
references to different parts of Hashemite-Jordanian history that users were expected to
recognize.

---

The amphitheater evokes Amman’s Roman past. Perhaps the Hashemite monarchy is attempting to present itself as like the Roman rulers before it, basing monuments (such as the King Hussein Park) on the Roman amphitheater that can be found in downtown Amman. The townhouse is an interesting example because it belongs to an urban space that Jordan was lacking before the early twentieth century. Homes in early twentieth-century Amman did not resemble these town houses. According to Rogan, when Circassian settlers arrived in Amman in the late nineteenth century, they dismantled Islamic architectural structures in order to use the stone to build their homes. The Circassian architectural style was visually distinct from the Levantine style: “Unlike the courtyard home typical to much of the Arab world, the Circassian home is an outward-looking design with large windows and porches, surrounded by gardens fenced in by a
Thus, Amman has been criticized for lacking an ‘identity’ by not conforming to the model Islamic city, a problematic model developed by Orientalists from cities such as Damascus, Cairo, and Fez. By creating a representation of Islamic architecture that did not exist in Amman, the Jordanian government imported a visual heritage of middle-class life in the Levant. From her study of museums in Jordan and the shaping of Jordanian national culture, Malt argues, “Jordan attempts to perpetuate its image as part of the exotic Middle East – continuing to market and identify itself visually with an Orientalist past”. This is done through constructing Orientalist images of a place and emphasizing the ‘noble Bedouin’ population. Furthermore, similarly to Solidere’s reconstruction of downtown Beirut, the Jordanian government’s construction of places which have no historical reality in Amman creates mere spectacles, rather than reconstructions.

By presenting the Levantine townhouse as a part of Jordanian national history, the government displays a discourse of national identity that evokes belonging to the rest of the Arab world; more specifically, a middle-class, Orientalized Arab world.

The government also spatially reinforces the connection between Jordan and the modernizing efforts of the Ottoman Empire through a display of a segment of the Hijaz Railway. The railway expresses a discourse of Jordan’s modernity that belongs strictly to the early twentieth century. The Hijaz Railway was built during the Ottoman Empire’s modernization period and the stop at Amman gave the city a newfound significance in the empire. By referring to Amman in the Ottoman modernizing past, the Hashemite monarchy can spatially link past modernization with contemporary discourses of

---

48 Malt, 34.
modernity. Furthermore, the Hijaz Railway can be read as a reference to the Arab Revolt, due to the Hashemite-led attack on the railway in the Allied offensive against the Ottoman Empire. This reminds visitors of the Hashemites’ role as leaders of an Arab nationalist movement in the early twentieth century and is part of a Hashemite discourse of legitimacy.

The area between the Cultural Village and the Historical Passageway was fenced so that visitors at the time of my visit would have needed to explore more of the park before reaching the chronological beginning of the Historical Passageway. The passageway displays archeological artifacts representative of time periods from the Paleolithic period to the modern day in chronological order in space. Each Hashemite king also receives his own mosaic (Figure 9) and the passageway culminates with a mosaic display of the Hashemite family tree, which visually outlines their descent from Prophet Muhammad (Figure 10).
According to Corbett, the passageway is the first attempt to use artifacts representative of ancient history to create a unified history of Jordan. Furthermore, aside from the Hashemite family tree and a depiction of Jerusalem’s holy places, the passageway is mostly secular. Corbett argues that the passageway presents a discourse of Hashemite historical legitimacy, not religious legitimacy. In Corbett’s words, the passageway is a “demonstration of things having happened just as they should have. From the dust of the ancients the modern Hashemite kingdom-nation was destined to be.”

By asserting Jordan’s ancient history, the Hashemite monarchy asserts that Jordan is a natural nation, and not an artificially-created state, and that the Hashemites are destined to rule Jordan as a modern nation.

---

50 Corbett, 184.
The passageway also represents the shift that occurred in the 1990s in official discourse of national identity from one based on Arab nationalism, with references to the Arab Revolt, to one based on Jordanian nationalism and history specific to the territory of Jordan. Corbett argues that until recently, “The [discursive] mental map of the *watan* (homeland) was not necessarily the Jordanian nation-state, but the Arab nation, with special prominence afforded to the Hashemites.” But as Jordan’s physical and imaginary borders changed, especially after Black September and the disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, so too did discourses of national identity. The contemporary discourse of ‘Hashemite-centric, Jordanian Arab inclusivity’ required representations of antiquity and Jordanian ancient history, in order to emphasize Jordan and not the wider Arab nation or Islamic *umma*. By doing so, the official discourse of national identity crossed religious and ethnic boundaries and included minority groups such as Christians.

---

51 Corbett, 185.
and Circassians. At the same time, this discourse excluded groups and ideologies that could undermine Hashemite legitimacy, namely Palestinians, Ba’athism, and Nasserism. However, the Jordanian government has not forgotten Jerusalem and continues to reinforce discourses of Islamic legitimacy. In the passageway, one panel is devoted to showing Hashemite renovations and administration of the Dome of the Rock (Figure 11), thus reinforcing the Hashemites’ emphasis on its role as the legitimate protectors of the holy sites in Jerusalem.

(Figure 11. Displays of a map of the Dome of the Rock and a plaque discussing Hashemite renovations of the mosque.)

This spatial discourse of Jordanian-centric national identity began to expressed at a specific moment in time in the 2000s and can be considered part of King Abdullah II’s attempt to control readings of modernity. Narratives of ancient history and Jordan-centered national identity are expressions of an emerging discourse of hypermodernity

52 Corbett, 185.
that are visible in spaces right now. Since his ascent to the throne in 1999, Abdullah II has embarked on neoliberal policies consisting of privatization and cooperation with international real estate companies to build luxury real estate and tourism facilities. Corbett argues that due to privatization, the Hashemite monarchy no longer has such a strong control of economic resources in Jordan. Abdullah II has represented himself as a mediator between tradition and modernity. By doing so, Abdullah II is sending the message that he can modernize Jordan and advance Jordan’s economy according to global standards but also preserve ‘traditional’ values. This message is disseminated in the context of intensified rivalries and divisions between different segments of the population and a sense that Abdullah II can no longer control the economy.

According to Corbett, the King Hussein Park is a way for the Hashemite monarchy to take control of discourses of modernity and nationhood.

> It is intended to help stem the tide of disbelief by demonstrating that the history of Jordan, with the Hashemites at the helm, has unfolded exactly as it should have. The wall is a conversation between modernity and tradition; it is a new reading on tradition and the king’s attempt to direct the reading on a new and contentious modernity.

### The Downtown Amman(s) and Discourses of Modernity

The area considered downtown Amman is one of the oldest public spaces in Amman. Some of the city’s most famous restaurants, cafes, bookstores, and markets are located in downtown Amman and Jordan’s first national mosque, the Al-Husseini Mosque, is also located here. This is where the Anglo-Hashemite government hosted

---

53 According to a discussion with Corbett, this fear that the Hashemite monarchy was not in control of Jordan intensified in March 2013, when *The Atlantic* published an article about Abdullah II as a modern monarch. Corbett posited that many Jordanians were scared because the article portrayed the king as lacking control over the direction of the country’s development.

54 Corbett, 165.
parades as performances of legitimacy during the 1920s. Perhaps the most famous site in downtown Amman is the Roman Amphitheater, which is still highly publicized in Jordan’s tourism literature today. This section analyzes the Jordanian government’s efforts to revamp the downtown area, primarily through the construction of the Hashemite Court and the Hashemite Plaza. These places were constructed in the context of a new discourse of hypermodernity that the Hashemite monarchycirculates as the trajectory of Jordan’s development and as a source of legitimacy for the monarchy. This discourse of modernity is contested through references to another discourse of modernity that is evoked by the ‘old downtown’.

The Hashemite Court is a large open space located in front of the Roman Amphitheater near the heart of what is considered downtown Amman (Figure 12). Hoping to build a vibrant public space downtown, the Jordanian government built the white stone space in front of the theater in 1986. However, the court is noticeably underused as a spontaneous space or a meeting place and public participation has not been at the level the government anticipated. Therefore, the government has needed to plan activities such as musical parades in order to attract people to the place.\(^55\)

Furthermore, the Jordanian government built a colonnade between the amphitheater and the rest of downtown to try to facilitate movement towards the court but this was transformed into a strictly controlled shopping area, where vendors are permitted to sell only touristic products.\(^56\) There are also seats around the trees to facilitate group activities but they are mostly occupied by single individuals. Furthermore, the court seems to present different uses according to gender. According to Amireh, unlike men, women are

\(^55\) Amireh, 154.
\(^56\) Ibid., 155.
rarely seen lying down on benches or chatting in social groups. Women are
‘circumstantial users’ and tend to use the place as a transient space: They pass through,
tend to walk by the edges of the court rather than through the middle, or stop to buy a
snack. Women’s participation in this space is actually decreasing. Additionally, there
were spaces designated as children’s play areas but these did not attract parents or their
children. An interesting aspect of the Hashemite Court is that there was a Bedouin tent,
which Amireh argues did not succeed in engaging with users for two reasons. Local
residents recognized that the tent was a mere adaptation or representation of ‘traditional’
life used to attract tourists. Meanwhile, tourists did not know how to engage with the tent
outside of the tent’s usual context, i.e. in the desert. For locals and tourists, the tent took
on a different meaning in an urban space. This meaning differed from the government’s
intention and thus, the tent was not successful in attracting users. According to Amireh’s
concept of spaces and vocabularies, this place did not attract the expected variety of users
and has not shaped the expected adaptation of users to the cues and meanings of the
space. Most people actually avoid the Hashemite Court and it has become a space for
unlawful vendors.

57 Amireh, 156-158.
58 Ibid., 157.
59 Ibid., 160.
Recently, the government embarked on a project called the ‘Hashemite Plaza’ next to the Hashemite Court. The plaza consists of (or will consist of) sleek metal covered walkways, benches, and open spaces. The renovations appear to be completed as of May 2013 but access to the open spaces are blocked, although users can access the walkways and benches. The images of the designs on billboards around the plaza suggest that the designer intends for the plaza to be an extremely social space teeming with various groups of people (Figure 13). It is unclear how the space will be used but if it is similar to the Hashemite Court, then the designer is likely to be disappointed. So far, old men have used the benches as transient resting places, rather than socializing spaces, and it may even be a space for homeless individuals.
The Hashemite Court and the Hashemite Plaza are both government initiatives to create public gathering spaces in the downtown area. These developments can be considered part of an effort to move away from the historical public spaces of Faisal Square, just a few blocks away from the Roman Amphitheater. In the 1920s and 1930s, Faisal Square was the political and intellectual hub of Amman. The government has
actually recognized Faisal Square’s importance to Amman with a sign in the downtown area that describes how Faisal Square/Plaza was the meeting place between the Hashemite monarchy and the residents of Amman and how Faisal Square “represents geographically and spatially the heart of the city of Amman.” The Anglo-Hashemite government used to perform rituals of legitimacy in the space of Faisal Square through spectacles and parades. The sign also describes Faisal Square as “the hearth of an active public sphere” (Figure 14) due to the hotels, bookshops, and cafes that allowed journalists, politicians, and writers to meet and form a public sphere. Faisal Square was compared to Martyrs’ Square in Beirut and Sahet al Marje in Damascus and Amman as a whole was considered one of the active cities within the Levant, along with Damascus, Jerusalem, and Beirut. The sign provides a map highlighting key hotels, bookshops, and cafes.

(Figure 14. Faisal Square as a public space.)

---

Daher reinforces the sign’s description and he claims that the intellectual activities in Faisal Square connected Amman with other urban centers, playing a similar role as Martyrs’ Square in Beirut. Amman was not famous for early grand, monumental public spaces but it had public spaces in the forms of cafes and corner shops.\(^61\) He describes how many of these sites are representative of Amman’s ‘urban heritage of modernity’ because the intellectual activity showed signs of a city moving into modernity. But many of them have since been demolished in the name of another kind of modernity, one that gestures towards neoliberal principles.\(^62\)

Despite the Jordanian government’s acknowledgement of the significance of Faisal Square as a public space, the government has cooperated with private development companies to create a new downtown. These new ‘public’ spaces are built in the image of a new kind of modernity in the context of neoliberal economic policies. After King Abdullah II succeeded his father King Hussein, he embarked on a neoliberal economic program based on privatization and foreign investment. The state-owned property development company MAWARED has been developing high-rise office buildings in neighborhoods such as Abdali to try to create a new downtown in the image of neoliberalism. According to Daher, the new downtown will have an IT park, upscale offices and residential spaces, and a large plaza connecting the new downtown to the Parliament buildings and national mosque in Abdali.\(^63\) This image of hypermodernism is based on an ‘urban culture’ of Western cosmopolitanism, a competitive business climate, and first-class tourism and leisure facilities. This is the image required to attract

\(^{61}\) Daher, “Qualifying Amman,” 79.
\(^{62}\) Ibid., 77.
The new Western-educated, technocratic political elite, which emerged with King Abdullah II, has controlled most of this neoliberal economic development and they have used Solidere in Beirut and Dubai as models. Similarly to Dubai, MAWARED and other property development companies have built ‘gated communities’ or private spaces disguised as public spaces, such as luxury malls and hotels. These are spaces of consumption and access to these spaces is controlled by a discourse of respectability that is determined by socioeconomic class. Daher argues that these neoliberal policies and gated communities will only perpetuate the urban geographies of Amman, which is already split between east and west. But this discourse of hypermodernity with aspects of neoliberalism is the kind of modernity that King Abdullah II claims to bring forward as a culmination of Jordan’s ancient, noble past.

Among the general public, there appears to be a level of resistance or, at least, a lack of interest in the Hashemite monarchy’s newly sponsored ‘public spaces’. There is an emerging interest in Amman’s ‘urban heritage of modernity’ through the initiatives of the Amman Municipality and residents’ associations. The Amman Municipality has embarked on gentrification projects in downtown and to improve pedestrianization. One example is Rainbow Street, located at the first circle and close to downtown, which is now a space with coffee shops, art galleries and shops, and restaurants. Unlike most places in Amman, visitors can walk down Rainbow Street and sit on various benches. Residents’ associations such as the Jebel Amman Residents’ Association have started flea markets in order to raise awareness of older areas such as Jebel Amman and create

---

66 Daher, “Qualifying Amman,” 84.
interest in an alternative form of shopping to malls. An interesting form of resistance to neoliberalism is one raised by the National Committee of Military Veterans. In 2010, the committee (made up of both Transjordanian and Jordanian-Palestinian elites) published a public criticism of the policies of King Abdullah II and the appointments of Palestinians to important positions in the government, for which the committee blames Abdullah’s wife Queen Rania, who is of Palestinian origin. In their view, the monarchy’s neoliberal development program has privileged some elites and not others. Despite the presence of some Palestinian elites among the protesters, this criticism can be read as a protest by the old elite of the neoliberal development program - and the diminishing power of the committee members as opposed to the ascendance of Abdullah’s technocratic elite - framed in terms of national identity. The committee presents the neoliberal economic policies as an attack by Palestinians on Jordanians. But perhaps the true concern is Abdullah’s vision of a modern Jordan, which excludes the old political elite, as represented by the committee, and privileges a new, younger group of both Jordanians and Palestinians close to the king. In this way, ideas about modernity and anxiety about control of resources impact discourses of national identity.

Conclusion

The spaces and places analyzed in this chapter indicate shifts in official discourses of national identity over time. Beginning with a discourse of Arab nationalism showcased at the Martyrs’ Memorial, the Hashemite monarchy has created narratives of a unified,

---

67 It is also important to remember that most residents involved in Rainbow Street and the Jebel Amman Residents’ Association are at least middle-class. Therefore, this activism in creating alternative spaces should not be read as an activity or interest that is accessible to all residents in Amman.

68 Corbett, 189.
teleological Jordanian history that implies that the Hashemite monarchs have inherited Jordan from the great rulers and civilizations of Jordan’s ancient past. As an image of Jordanian membership, to use Lefebvre’s words, the monumental spaces promote loyalty to the monarchy as a prerequisite for loyal citizenship and present spatial discourses of Jordanian national identity based on the notions of Arab nationalism, Islamic legitimacy, and a continuous Jordanian history culminating in Hashemite rule and its successive kings. More recently, under the reign of King Abdullah II, the Jordanian government has embarked on a somewhat controversial neoliberal economic program and many of the spatial discourses of national identity are circulated in spaces that have been constructed as part of the neoliberal project (King Hussein Park, Jordan Museum, and Hashemite Plaza). Similarly to how the Jordanian government embarked on creating a visual Islamic identity for the city of Amman in the 1980s, it is currently creating a visual and spatial identity of hypermodernity with echoes of neoliberalism. Several communities have created alternative public spaces such as outdoor markets to counter the increasing number of luxury malls in Amman. But many users also appreciate places such as the King Hussein Park, which in itself does not express a vision of modernity but it is located in a space in which values of hypermodernity and neoliberalism are circulated.

It is important to remember that each ‘public’ space constrains who can use the space and users themselves limit access to the space from others deemed ‘inappropriate’. Spaces controlled by the political elite and state-designated public spaces have not been popular so far due to conflicting experiences of modernity. The Jordanian government has torn down many of the ‘public spaces’ at Faisal Square from the 1920s and 1930s and has embarked on projects to create vast parks and plazas and a new downtown in
neoliberal spaces. The government seeks to control which spaces are public. But for many Jordanians, spaces such as cafes and restaurants, which Daher described as Amman’s urban heritage of modernity, remain popular sites of socialization. There is a discrepancy between the vocabulary and meanings of the government’s spaces and the way users understand the spaces. Thus, this impacts how the spaces are used.
Conclusion

Since the establishment of Transjordan in 1921, the Hashemite monarchy has continuously drawn on a range of historical narratives and discourses of national identity to legitimize its rule. The monarchy chose to favor certain discourses at specific moments due to political and social contexts. Despite the dominance of certain discourses of national identity, communities excluded from these discourses had opportunities to articulate their own visions of the nation and belonging to the nation. These different discourses of national identity, especially as expressed in public spaces, indicate that constructing a nation is not a one-time event but requires continuous discursive interventions and performances of nationhood and national identity. Despite the Hashemite monarchy’s rhetoric, Jordan was not a ‘natural’ outcome of an organic historical process but a political project undertaken by many different actors. This process includes the active, contested, and ongoing processes of constructing ever-changing narratives of national identity in the context of a changing set of power relations.

This thesis explores how and why different actors, especially the Hashemite monarchy, constructed different discourses of national identity at various moments in time from the mandate period to the present. During the mandate period, Abdullah, whose ambitions to gain more territory for the Hashemite state never wavered, continuously emphasized the ideals of Arab nationalism. The discourse of Arab nationalism not only expressed the idea that a unified Arab state was more legitimate than separate nation-states but was also a source of legitimacy for the Hashemites due to their role in the Arab Revolt and their status as sherifs and former protectors of Mecca. The
Arab nation that Abdullah envisioned was rightfully ruled by the Hashemites. Thus, the message to Transjordanians was that they should be loyal to the Hashemites in order to be patriotic members of the Arab nation. During the same period, former political elites from the Ottoman period framed their demands and criticism of the Anglo-Hashemite government in terms of autochthony. The opposition movement painted the British, the Hashemites, the Syrians, and the Palestinians who dominated the Transjordanian government as foreign. By doing so, the movement articulated a notion of autochthony and Transjordanian uniqueness that was in conflict with Abdullah’s vision of Transjordan as the core part of the Arab nation.

However, after Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1948, both the Hashemite monarchy and the opposition movement developed different discourses of national identity. Following the annexation, the Jordanian government needed to reframe Jordanian national identity to include the Palestinian population. The political opposition movement adopted Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser’s brand of anti-imperialist, socialist Arab nationalism and this challenged the monarchy’s discourse of Arab nationalism. Thus, the monarchy began to promote a dominant discourse of pan-Jordanianism, rather than Arab nationalism, to try to paint the Hashemites as legitimate rulers of both Jordanians and Palestinians. This discourse was based on notions of Islamic legitimacy, drawing on the Hashemites’ status as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and as former rulers of Mecca, as well as, beginning in 1948, rulers of the holy sites in Jerusalem. By conducting renovations and performing ceremonies at the holy sites in Jerusalem, the Hashemite monarchy asserted ownership of Jerusalem as a way to legitimize annexation.
Dominant discourses of national identity shifted again after the Six Day War in 1967 and after Black September in 1970. The loss of the West Bank combined with the expulsion of Palestinian militias from Jordanian territory led to the emergence of an ‘East Bank first’ discourse. This discourse was an articulation of Transjordanian nationalism, as opposed to a pan-Jordanian national identity, now no longer considered legitimate or feasible. The government framed its version of Transjordanian nationalism in terms of a tribalized national identity, which emphasized so-called tribal customs and traditions as representations of a national culture. Popular discourses of Jordanian national identity also privileged Bedouin accents, clothing, and food as symbols of the Jordanian nation. Alongside official and popular discourses of a tribalized national identity, communities that identified as tribes also began expressing notions of a tribalized national identity. They did so by denationalizing Palestinian-Jordanians and rendering them foreign in order to narrate themselves in their oral and written histories into a position of autochthony and significance. These narratives of tribal history potentially conflicted with the Hashemite monarchy’s discourses of national identity because these narratives privileged tribal communities and did not articulate a unified national identity that could truly include all communities in Jordan. Furthermore, these narratives of autochthony threatened the Hashemites because they would not be considered autochthonous according to this definition.

All of the discourses discussed above are expressed in public spaces in Amman. The Hashemite monarchy has drawn on a set of discourses of national identity and referrals to various historical periods or events ranging from Nabataean times to Hashemite rule of Jerusalem and has expressed these in different places in order to
legitimize its authority. The analysis of the public spaces illustrated the monarchy’s construction of new narratives of Jordanian history and expressions of Jordanian national identity. During the 2000s, the Hashemite monarchy built places that combined histories of ancient civilizations with modern achievements and aspirations of Hashemite rule. By doing so, the monarchy portrayed itself as the glorious culmination of an organically evolving Jordanian history. Alongside referrals to the past, the Jordanian government has also articulated a vision of Jordan’s future that is hypermodern with gestures towards neoliberal principles. The various reactions to Jordan’s neoliberal economic policies of the last ten years indicate competing ideas about imaginaries of modernity, national identity, and the trajectory of Jordan as nation-state.

The analysis presented in this thesis contributes to an understanding of how in the context of Jordan’s ‘artificial creation’, the monarchy and other groups of Jordanians have created a national identity or national identities that could be viewed as legitimate. This thesis has not been able to address to what extent communities in Jordan have considered or consider these discourses of national identity legitimate. However, by tracing constructions of national identity from the mandate period onwards and by analyzing the spatial expressions of discourses of national identity, this study has shown how the Hashemite monarchy’s efforts to legitimize itself through changing representations of the nation is an ongoing process. How and why various groups in Jordan have influenced or resisted these official discourses of national identity is an area that will require new sources and further research. However, by documenting and analyzing changes in the Hashemite monarchy’s discourses of national identity over time,
this thesis has contributed to an understanding of how discursive and spatial constructions in nation-building gain significance and can become dominant.
Bibliography

Primary Sources

Government Archives


Records of the British India Office, Record Groups IOR/L/PS/10/1144 and IOR/L/PJ/7/422. The British Library, London.

Memoirs


Websites


*Contemporary Newspapers and Magazines*


*Secondary Sources*


