


Spring 2015

The Effect of Refugees on Jordanian Identity

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SIT Study Abroad

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The Effect of Refugees on Jordanian Identity

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for SIT Jordan:
Modernization and Social Change, SIT Study Abroad, Spring 2015

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Ashraf and the rest of the SIT staff for helping me in my research and for guiding me through this process. I would also like to thank my interviewees for taking the time out of their busy schedules to meet with me. Finally, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Marwan al-Zoubi, for assisting me throughout the process of making the paper. I also want to thank my host brother, Amer Abu Shakra for helping me in translating articles from Arabic.

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Abstract

Jordan has become known as the home for refugees from the crises that have occurred along its borders. Several waves of large groups of refugees have come to Jordan: 1948, 1967, 1991, 2003, and 2011-present, with copious amounts of refugees coming from different surrounding countries to Jordan. The Hashemite Kingdom is ruled through keeping relations between the Bedouin tribes that have lived in the area from the founding of the country. This has led to the denial of equality for former refugees who obtained citizenship as well as the other refugee populations in areas such as work and education. As such, there have been clashes between the refugees and the people who are descended from the original tribes in Jordan. These clashes have not taken a violent nature, but rather a clash of culture. This paper explores whether the identities of the Jordanians have been affected by the identities of the refugees who have come to reside in Jordan for the long term through examining the development of Jordanian identity with research and interviews with “Jordanian-Jordanians.” The conclusion of this study finds that with the influx of refugees, the Jordanian identity has strengthened. This study helps to continue to research conducted in looking how identities are created, strengthened, and weakened.

Topic Keywords: Sociology, History, Ethnicity, Curriculum and Instruction

Introduction

Context

Jordanian identity has been a studied topic, as the artificial creation of the country created an interesting example to examine for identity building. With the diverse amount of cultures in Jordan, and the situations in the surrounding countries, Jordanian culture and identity have been the most strong and stable to study in the region. As Jordan gains importance in the due to these conflicts, from increased military and diplomatic presence in the region, it is important to study how the country has been internally affected by the conflicts. For this reason, I chose to study in Jordan and study the topic of Jordanian identity for my research. Identity plays an integral role in the stability of the country, and studying it is vital to understanding Jordan.

I began focusing on the idea of identity in a class I took last semester at my school, George Washington University, called Political Geography. The first topic we discussed in this class was identity formation. We read passages from the book “The Power of Identity: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture” by Manuel Castells to provide context in exploring the development of different identities as we examined the geography of various countries such as Iraq, Rwanda, and Georgia. This first lesson became relevant in my own life as I examined my identity as an American, while living in a foreign country, and was able to further understand my own it. I now comprehend what my American identity means in relation to other people’s identities. I wanted to examine Jordanian identity and what has influenced it, in lieu of the interesting and modern history of Jordan. I began researching, and discovered that there had been research on the Jordanian identity and on Palestinian-Jordanian identity, but not how the different groups of refugees that have come to Jordan have affected the identity of Jordanians.

Historical Context

For many years before the founding of Jordan in 1947, the people who lived in the area that became Jordan identified themselves based on where they lived and to which tribe they belonged. Jordan began as a rural country, with a few, lightly populated cities that bordered the Jordan Valley in the northwestern region of what later became the country. During the Arab Revolt at the end of the Ottoman Empire, southern Jordan was a hotspot for activity against the Empire. The railroad that went from Istanbul to Mecca ran through Jordan and the British saw it as key to supplying the Ottoman outposts. The Arabs, working with the British, bombed the train in southern Jordan in an attempt to weaken the Empire as it took on the Allied forces in the first World War. The Ottomans lost control of the area and the Levant became partitioned in the Sykes-Picot agreement which led the area to fall under mandatory control by the main colonizing powers of Europe.

For the first time in history, Jordan became one singular entity in 1922. The people who lived in this area had always been a part of an empire with a far away capital that was not concerned about day to day life in their rural area. They stayed aligned to their families, the very same groups that fought together against the Ottomans. However, the British Empire placed a prince from the Hejaz kingdom in modern-day Saudi Arabia, Emir Abdullah to rule their new colony of Transjordan. The British positioned him to be in control of this land to quell the Arab forces angered by the mandation of the Levant and who sought to assist the Syrians in their revolt against the British.¹ Abdullah sought to create a lasting kingdom in this area that had been deemed too unruly to control. To do this, he placed the political powers of the country into the

¹Hoiberg, Dale H. "Abdullah." In *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 22. 2010.

hands of the Bedouin tribesmen to appease them.² This was the period that saw the beginning of the development of the Jordanian identity. Until this period, Jordan had not existed on its own, and therefore, the people had not developed to have a national identity. The placement of a King who claims to be a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad legitimized, in their eyes, being ruled by a foreigner and gave them the opportunity to develop their own identity, especially because their ruler saw them as the keepers of Jordan's culture.

However, the country had very little time to do this, as al-Nakba occurred and millions of Palestinians came to Jordan. Since then, the waves of refugees came, and the Jordanian-Jordanians ceased to be the majority. First, in 1948, and again, in a much larger group, in 1967 came Palestinians who had left their homeland that had been partitioned and occupied by Israel. The number of Palestinians who came to Jordan was greater than the number of inhabitants already living in Jordan. To this day, the Palestinians still reside in Jordan and outnumber the Jordanian-Jordanians. They were estimated to be at a population of three million in 2008.³ Two waves of Iraqi refugees came during the two wars that it experienced, in 1991, and throughout the mid-2000s. Then, following the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, as a part of the Arab Spring, many Syrians have fled across their southern border into Jordan. Not to mention, before the creation of Jordan, Circassians and Armenians fled to Jordan (not in large numbers), and Lebanese refugees used Jordan to escape from their own civil war last century before returning to Lebanon. Jordan has become a very diverse place in terms of the amount of cultures that now exist within its borders, and the Jordanians do not nearly make up a majority of their own country anymore.

²Salibi, Kamal S. *The Modern History of Jordan*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1993.

³"World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Jordan". *Minority Rights Group International*. 2008

Question

In the United States, the American identity has been famously shaped by all of the groups that have come there. The term “American” applies to many ethnicities that all live in the United States. The main ethnicity of Jordan, “Arabs” also constitute a majority in most of the countries that are in the surrounding area. Jordan provides an interesting example because of an influx of people from different cultures, but the same ethnicity.

The influx of the different cultures has no doubt had some sort of effect on the Jordanian identity, especially because the identity seems to be merely rooted in a shared living area. The question this paper explores is: How have the refugees that have come to Jordan affected the Jordanian identity? So, when these large groups of refugees live in the area that is defined as the basis for the Jordanian identity, the identity must have been affected, whether it is conscious or subconscious in the minds of the Jordanians.

To measure the impact on the Jordanian identity, I chose to only see it from the Jordanian-Jordanian perspective. I conducted this study by attempting to interview as many Jordanian-Jordanians as I could, young and old. Because of where I live, this study was mostly conducted in Amman, where the impact mixture of cultures would be larger because of the diversity in the city. I visited one area of the northern Badia region, in al-Mafraq governorate, in an attempt to examine the changes in the Jordanian identity from its source, the Bedouin people. Before beginning the study, I predicted that the different groups of people that have come to Jordan would have mixed into the culture, similar to how the cultures have mixed in the United States to all fall under the term of “American.” My main reason for thinking this is because of the history on how cultures have mixed throughout the world. When new cultures have come to live together in places all over the world, there has either been violent conflict or the two have

mixed through marriage and shared spaces. In Jordan, it appeared to be only the latter with Jordanians welcoming the refugees as fellow brothers.

Theory

I based my research on the theories behind identity formation. My main source for this theory is from Manuel Castells' book that I read excerpts from in my Geography class that I took last semester. In this book, Castells examines the key factors that go into the formation of identity. He theorizes that there are three types of identity, Legitimizing Identity (the mainstream aspects of society), Resistance Identity (identities formed from the qualities of society stigmatized by the mainstream), and Project Identity (an identity that seeks to change society). Castelles says that these identities can change depending on the situation they exist in. He also says that each of these identities goes through different building processes to become that form of identity. For example, Castelles says, "...territorial communities, nationalist self-affirmation, or even the pride of self-denigration,...are all expressions of what I name the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded. That is, the building of defensive identity in the terms of dominant institutions/ideologies, reversing the value judgment while reinforcing the boundary."⁴ In this example, Castelles is describing one of the main ways that a "Resistance Identity" can be created by supporting the unaccepted opinion or ideology, but still following the ideologies of the Legitimizing Identity. These theories help to understand how identities are formed, whether they are a reaction to something, or the leading ideologies that have been supported by mainstream society.

⁴Castelles, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*, 2nd ed., 8-9. John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

Literature Review

There has been no research that I could locate that discussed this topic directly, but there is plenty of research done on the creation of the Jordanian identity. The unique and recent history that Jordan provides gives an interesting example of identity formation, so there is a lot written on the formation of this specific identity.

However, is research in on how Palestinians affected the Jordanian identity, most likely because they have been in Jordan for such a long time. Muhammad Abdullah al-Jeriibii' wrote in his article titled "A Sociological Study on the State of the Jordanian Identity" on the formation of the Jordanian identity, and how it had been affected by the Palestinian. He says (originally in Arabic), "the common identity of that time [of the Ottoman Empire] was the Arab identity that was looking for independence from the Ottomans. So, after the establishment, at the beginning of the twenties, until the fifties, the main priority for the monarchy was the social and geographic unity in order to create a centralized state."⁵ In this passage, the author describes the origins of the Jordanian identity. This is key to this research because it is the basis for it. The understanding of where the Jordanian identity comes from is incredibly important to understanding how it could be influenced. Since the author's assertion that the identity is based on a shared geographic area, it could be endangered by another group coming into that same area.

Al-Jeriibii' moves with this thought of a threat changing the Jordanian identity by creating a shared space within the borders by describing what happened to the Jordanian identity after the Palestinians came, "The Palestinian identity also had issues from [al-Nakba] because many of the Palestinians came to Jordan and began to consider themselves as Jordanian. That created a national Jordanian identity that was more loyal to the political system and to the royal

⁵ محمد عبد الله الجريبي. "دراسة سوسيولوجية لحالة الهوية الأردنية." الثرية. 2009.

family.”⁶ This quote continues the story of the development of the Jordanian identity by saying the coming of Palestinians strengthened the Jordanian identity. They did this by legitimizing the royal family and government. I strongly agree with this argument that the Jordanian identity stems from the monarchy and its legitimacy. At the beginning of Jordan’s history, the Emir Abdullah is the one who brought together the people of Jordan to create a new society. It has been the different kings in Jordan’s history that have brought the stability to the country that is so treasured by its population.

Even though the monarchy has provided a stable place to live, the author still acknowledges there are issues regarding Jordanian identity today, “The national identity no doubt still faces many problems because of the political issues. There is also a lack of cohesion in the society itself, which sometimes becomes apparent. Though, these problems would be solved if there was a solution to the Palestinian issue.”⁷ Even though the Jordanians of Palestinian descent have accepted their lives in Jordan, the author concedes that the Palestinians are still separated from Jordanian society. The author offers four ways that this can be solved, “build the Jordanian identity on the happenings of Jordan since its creation, make government policy based on democracy, scraping geographic bias, teach the national identity in all levels of school, and create policies to increase the level of cohesion so that all members of Jordanian society are able to take part in everyday Jordanian life.”⁸ This is important for my topic as I explore the reasons why Jordanian society may still be separated, and not mixed like I predicted at the outset of conducting this research.

⁶ محمد عبد الله الجريبيع.
⁷ محمد عبد الله الجريبيع.
⁸ محمد عبد الله الجريبيع.

The article, “Jordan is Palestinian” by MudarZahran originally published in the Middle East Quarterly, argues that the marginalization of the Palestinians in Jordanian society has pushed them to no longer desire to live here, especially in recent years, “The complex relationship between the Palestinian majority and the Hashemite minority seems to have become tenser since Abdullah ascended the throne...”⁹Zahran says that because of the lack of work opportunities and a higher tax rate, Palestinians do not feel like they are a part of Jordanian society. He points to some examples of their abuse by the Bedouin-descended minority, “A U.S. embassy cable... reported "bullying" practiced by the fans of al-Faisali Soccer Club (predominantly Bedouin Jordanians) against the fans of al-Wihdat Soccer Club (predominantly Palestinians)... Two days after the cable was released, Jordanian police mercilessly attacked Palestinian soccer fans...”¹⁰ He says that this points to the fact that the Jordanians still separate the Palestinian in Jordanian society, and that there is not a mixing of the cultures, like I hypothesized. The examination of identity in Jordan in this research paper will prove whether Jordanian society has allowed the inclusion of the Palestinian identity. If my findings show that the identity of Jordanians shifted when the Palestinians entered Jordan, and shifted to include them, then it could partially disprove his theory that they are not included in society.

Joseph Nevo in his article “Changing Identities in Jordan” makes a similar argument to al-Jeriibii’ in that the Jordanian government has tried to discriminate the Palestinians and now needs to pursue inclusion. He also makes the same argument that the Jordanian identity is based on geographic borders, “When the British Mandate ended in 1946 and Transjordan became an independent kingdom, Jordanian identity was adopted by most of its population. It was based on

⁹Zahran, Mudar. 2012. "Jordan Is Palestinian." *Middle East Quarterly* 19, no. 1: 3-12. *Middle Eastern & Central Asian Studies*, EBSCOhost.

¹⁰Zahran

a common territory (which was separated from the neighbouring countries by modern borders), a central administration and the army.”¹¹ However, Nevo goes further into the different treatment of the Palestinians that lived in the West Bank versus those that lived in the East Bank, “To achieve the Jordanization of the Palestinians, King Abdullah adopted a policy (which King Hussein duly followed) of ‘controlled integration.’ It involved deliberate discrimination against the collective Palestinian body in the West Bank, as far as representation and participation were concerned.”¹² The government of Jordan attempted to keep the traditional Jordanian culture superior by separating it from the Palestinians that became the majority in Jordanian territory. This is the same as the previous two readings, and what I learned on my program on the treatment of the Jordanian-Palestinians in Jordanian society.

While the government has tried to continue with the policy of separating the two cultures, the author acknowledges that there has still been mixing of the two, “Previous efforts to ‘Jordanize’ Palestinians or ‘Palestinize’ Jordanians have failed. In recent years, the concept of a Jordanian entity as an amalgamation of the Transjordanian and Palestinian elements has been progressively stabilized.”¹³ The author says in this passage that despite efforts to separate the Jordanians and Palestinians that live in Jordan, there has still been a combination of the two. This comes into direct conflict with the previous two arguments. Nevo’s argument is more in line with my prediction that the culture of Jordan is a mixture of many different cultures. I believed that even though there were government policies that attempted to suppress the Palestinian culture to

¹¹Nevo, Joseph. 2003. "Changing Identities in Jordan." *Israel Affairs* 9, no. 3: 187-208. *Middle Eastern & Central Asian Studies*, EBSCOhost

¹²Nevo

¹³Nevo

dominate the Jordanian one, the cultures have mixed. As I continued my research, I attempted to learn the whether my hypothesis and Nevo's argument were valid.

Methodology

Interviews

The main component of my research on this topic was conducted by interviewing individuals. I chose to use this method because it would provide me with direct answers to the topics I hoped to explore on the broader topic of Jordanian identity. With the help of my advisor, I chose four topics to discuss with my interviewees: the definition of the Jordanian identity, the keffiyeh and what it means, how the educational system reinforces the Jordanian identity, and how economic status plays a role in the Jordanian identity. These topics helped me to learn, without directly asking, the role refugees may have had in the formation of the Jordanian identity.

I originally decided to interview Jordanian-Jordanians and second or third generation Jordanians of Palestinian descent. However, interviewing this second group proved to be a bigger challenge because of the lack of access I had to them and that I thought that the research would become too broad. So, I limited my study to focus only on the perspective of Jordanian-Jordanians. Within this group of people, I hoped to interview both young and old, so that I could compare the views of Jordanians who grew up and went to school at the beginning of Jordan's history and those who recently went to school.

Locating people to interview was not a challenge for me, as I had plenty of resources to turn to. My program provided with with contacts that were a diverse collection of ages and locations, precisely what I hoped for when I was conducting interviews. My first location for interviews was in al-Mafraq governorate in the Northern Badia region. I wanted to conduct

interviews in the Badia because that is where the Bedouins predominantly live. The Bedouins are the founders of the Jordanian identity, especially in the eyes of the government, so interviews with some of them would provide answers and a good basis for beginning my research portion of the paper. Two of the men I interviewed in al-Mafraq governorate were chosen for me because they were the ones who were available to interview at the time. The man who was my guide for the day was running his family's store while taking care of me. He would go to the grocery store next door and ask any available Jordanian man to come and be interviewed by me while he translated. Because these were the first interviews, they were a little awkward as I was figuring out which questions worked and which did not. I also had issues with translation. My questions were not simple yes or no, and they did not use vocab that I knew well in Arabic. So, while I had a translator, I worried that some of the important points during these interviews in the Badia were lost during the translation. So, I made a note to myself that because my questions were more complex and required the subject to express their thoughts, I realized it would be better to try and conduct the rest of my interviews in English, with English speaking subjects. The third person I interviewed was the man who had brought me to the village in the Northern Badia that day, so that interview went smoother than the others.

For my next two interviews, I wanted to get interviews with professors who would understand the subject well and give me good context on the older view of Jordanian identity. This also proved difficult because the professors were busy. In one instance, a retired professor was very busy and we could not meet up. So, I had to find additional contacts. These interviews were the strongest because they gave me the opportunity to further understand the history behind the identity of Jordanians. The two professors I interviewed also gave incredibly detailed answers to the questions. This also made it a challenge because sometimes they went off in

directions that we not completely related to the topic. This forced me to be more aware of what we were discussing, and had me attempt to steer the conversation back to being relevant to the question. This made the interviews longer than I expected, although it provided me with great information.

The third group I interviewed were affiliated with my program. They were “language partners” who work with SIT to learn English from us while we learn Arabic from them. All of them are younger, so it gave me the chance to see the younger, urban perspective that I was still missing from my research. This group was important because they have all been raised in a mixed environment, and have been educated in the last decade. The interviews with them went smoothly, for the most part. One factor I had forgotten was that I aimed to only interview Jordanian-Jordanians. One of my subjects revealed himself to be of Palestinian descent early on in the interview, which made whatever he was saying irrelevant to my conclusion. Another difficulty was scheduling, as I was unable to meet up with a language partner who had been busy when I reached him.

I conducted a total of nine interviews, which was also far less than I desired. My original wish was for thirty interviews, but I lowered that level to ten because my preliminary research was taking longer than expected and scheduling these interviews took time and patience. I wish I had reached the number of interviews I had hoped for, but the information I gained from this type of research helped me greatly in pursuit of an answer to my research question. Overall, this experience was extremely helpful towards drawing conclusions about my topic while putting me in touch with different perspectives across Jordan in both age and geography.

Material Culture

Researching material culture was far easier than conducting interviews because I was able to do it on my own time. For material culture, I decided to study the government sponsored slogans shown around Jordan during my studies in the country. These types of slogans appeared suddenly after Jordan announced it was increasing the fight against Da'ash (the Arabic acronym for ISIS) following the killing of the Jordanian pilot, MuathKasasbeh, which occurred towards the beginning of my time in Jordan. These slogans such as "Kulnaal'Urdun" (We are all Jordan) were of interest to me because they seemed to be very well received by the Jordanian public. Therefore, studying the history and motivations behind these slogans could provide me further insight into the Jordanian identity and whether an influx of refugees had affected the Jordanian identity. I conducted research on these by finding articles on the web about them, as well as examining the slogans themselves to attempt and interpret the meaning behind them. The study of this material culture contributed to my research by furthering my understanding of the Jordanian identity and what shapes it.

Findings

Interviews

Each of the eight Jordanian-Jordanian subjects I interviewed provided me with slightly different answers to the questions I asked. I was surprised how strong the Jordanian identity was. Each of the interviewees were proud of their nationality. In the United States, being proud of being American has become a political point, especially in the last decade. There is a significant amount of people in the United States who are embarrassed for things Americans have done, but for Jordanians it did not seem that way. The Jordanians I interviewed were honored to be a part of this nationality. In my consent form that each of my interviewees signed, I promised to keep

anonymity unless they expressed otherwise, which they did not, so all my subjects remain anonymous.

My first three interviews were conducted in the Northern Badia. The first interview was with a man who had been shopping in the grocery store. His answers were translated to me by my guide. On how he defines the Jordanian identity, he said that people are Jordanian because of the passport, the language, and the face, This answer caught me off guard because I would assume an answer along the lines of a shared history, but his first thought on it was on citizenship. When I asked if there had been any changes, he simply said no. The keffiyeh question only provided basic answers, and nothing that revealed new information about the Jordanian identity. On education, however, his answer was quite interesting. He told me that the schools focus a lot on the history of Jordan, but also a lot on the modern Palestinian issue. He also told me, though that they are changing the history books to focus more on Jordan. The reason for this strengthening, he said, was so that the students can know about the history of their heroes or know who to idolize. I asked him if he thought this was going to integrate the refugees more, but he thought that the focus is more on reminding the students on their history. As for the future of refugees he said that Syrians will eventually go home, but the Palestinians are necessary for the economy and would never leave. They do not want to return to their homeland.¹⁴

The answer that interested me the most was on the topic of education. He told me that the government saw a need for the students to learn more about their heroes. This essentially said that the government is trying to build a stronger national identity in the schools by having the children better understand Jordanian history and culture. While the keffiyeh question did not

¹⁴Interviewee 1 in discussion with the author, al-Mafraq governorate, April 15, 2015.

provide as satisfactory of an answer as I hoped, the idea that the government is using the education system to strengthen the Jordanian identity intrigued me.

The next interview I conducted was with a man about the same age as myself. On the Jordanian identity, he differed from the previous interviewee on focusing more on cultural aspects: the dialect and the dress, and also the skin color. Once again, the answer to the question of education proved to be very interesting. He told me that he only learned about Jordan in history class, from the beginning of human existence to modern times. This was especially interesting to me because of his age. He was younger than my previous interviewee, who told me that system of education was being reformed since he had been in school. The answer from the second interviewee affirmed this assertion. When I asked him about the problems refugees face, he told me that the Syrian refugees are not thankful, they need to be more thankful. He was frank with me, though, on the benefits of the refugees because he told me that if the refugees left, Jordan would lose funding from the international groups that assist Jordan.¹⁵ This interview helped me to understand the younger perspective of the people in the Badia.

My final interview in the Badia was conducted with my guide for the day in the North. This interview was interesting because I knew he had more interactions with people in Amman, so he gave me very different answers than the previous two interviews I conducted. He told me, similar to the first interview, that a Jordanian is a son of the country and that a Jordanian can do whatever they want. However, he said that work is also a big part of the identity. He explained to me that Syrians work by hand, Jordanians work in the public sector, and the Palestinians work in the private sector. Another interesting thing he told me was that the keffiyeh was not an identifier, but sports game are. He told me that his education focused the vast majority on the

¹⁵Interviewee 2 in discussion with the author, al-Mafraq governorate, April 15, 2015.

Arab World as a whole, continuing the correlation between age and an education that taught about the whole Arab World. When I asked him about whether the different groups of refugees have different problems, he gave me the narrative that I had read about for my research. He told me that the Palestinians only think about Palestine and are not focused on Jordan. He said that their mixing in Amman has created a 'white' dialect that is a mixture between the Jordanian dialect and the Palestinian one. Though, he told me that the Palestinians would make a big change if they had power, which they strongly desire.. He said that if all the refugees left, there would be no problems, especially in regard to jobs. There will always be other groups like the Egyptians to take the lower jobs that are known to currently employ Syrians. He added that the world would be perfect if the refugees left, because the problems in Jordan would be gone.¹⁶

I learned while in the Badia that the Jordanian identity is extremely strong, so much so that they feel animosity towards the other groups that have come to Jordan. The only positive force they have on the country seems to be that through them, Jordan receives a lot of international funding. The Bedouins complained that Syrians were taking jobs and that Palestinians were power hungry and unappreciative. The next group proved to be equally interesting.

My next interview was conducted at the University of Jordan with a professor of behavioral psychology. His interview was to provide me with the perspective of the older Jordanians. He defined Jordanians from a behavioral viewpoint, people who are looking for justice, co-operative, accommodating, and honest, a unique perspective I had not heard yet. He continued by describing Jordanians as very serious, committed persons who rarely rarely smile, but they will do their best to help you. He based this attitude off of the fact that Jordan had been

¹⁶Interviewee 3 in discussion with the author, al-Mafraq governorate, April 15, 2015.

a nomadic society, but the style of life completely changed because of the influx of Palestinian refugees, evolving into what we see of Jordan today. He said that there has been a lot of mixing of cultures after this urbanization, but the children are becoming more Jordanian. He pointed to the example of what the King and previous King have done in Jordan. They married Palestinian women, and had mixed kids, but are proud of being Jordanian. In regards to the keffiyah, he described them to be symbols that differentiate people. He believed that this is a bad attitude. He wished for the people of Jordan to unite, as they will be stronger. He wanted, specifically Palestinians, to show loyalty, whether or not they were born here. One way to have them appreciate the country more, the professor proposed, was for the government to focus more on Jordan. This would allow the Jordanians also to understand their country better. Just like in my previous interview, he said that there would be outsiders, like the Egyptians, who would fill the gap if the Syrians left.¹⁷ This interview was remarkably similar to the ones I conducted in the Badia. The older generation of Jordanians who live in Amman hold similar thoughts towards the refugee situation, most likely because they originally moved from the Badia to Amman when they were younger. The fierce attitude towards Palestinians was also striking, especially considering that a vast majority of the population in Amman is Palestinian. The interview also continued to disprove my hypothesis by further arguing that the Palestinians are not a part of Jordanian society. However, this attitude seemed to change based on age and occupation.

The next professor I interviewed was a retired history professor at his home. He had also worked as a secondary school teacher in the early sixties and then a diplomat for ten years. Like most of the other people I interviewed, he defined Jordanians by citizenship. He said that at one point, the *Bilaad al-Sham* countries (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine) felt as one people in

¹⁷Interviewee 4 in discussion with the author, University of Jordan, April 16, 2015.

the past, but now there are major differences. His reason for this was because the governments of each of those countries concentrated on increasing the allegiance to their respective governments. These politicians wanted to stay in power, so they created nationalism in their countries. This professor gave credit to government action for strengthening the identity in Jordan. The government was copying this tactic from Egypt in using slogans. He blamed the government's inability to solve the current problems and using the propaganda as a distraction. He told me the following example to support this argument. When he taught in secondary school, there was a focus on anti-Arab Nationalism in the schools. Instead, there was encouragement to follow political Islam because the Muslim Brotherhood controlled the Ministry of Education. He said this distracted from the issues by supporting other trends. In spite of this, he argued that the family is the one who creates national identity. Even though now there are Iraqi and Syrian kids who attend school in Jordan, at the end of the day, they return home to a family that reminds them of their home country. At the end of the interview, he said that if Jordan would have political reform and economic reforms there would lessen the negative effects of the refugees. Jordan would accomplish these by get rid of corruption, and allow full democracy. He finished by saying that the king should accept he is not the only man who makes the country what it is, the king has to understand that he is not fully helping.¹⁸ These last remarks really struck me. Throughout the interview, he blamed the government for attempting to increase nationalism to distract from the real problems that plagued Jordan. The rise in nationalism was because of the government action to distract from the real issues. This gave an answer to the question on whether the refugees affected the Jordanian identity, but in a very indirect way. Because of the influx of refugees, problems in Jordan have been exacerbated. To distract from these problems,

¹⁸Interviewee 5 in discussion with the author, Amman, April 27, 2015.

the Jordanian government invested in nationalism. This interview was by far the most opinionated among the interviews that were conducted for this research, and it provided the most direct answer to the research question so far.

The next four interviews I conducted were with language partners of SIT, all of whom are younger. However, one of the interviews was with someone of Palestinian descent, so it is not included in my paper. The first interview was conducted in a cafe. He described Jordanians and Palestinians as being the same now. However, the newer refugees to Jordan, the Syrians and Libyans, do not talk or mix with the Jordanians. The Libyans, Syrians, and Iraqis always just interact with each other, The Iraqis at his school sat with each other and not with the Jordanians.¹⁹ He said the Syrians probably feel foreign in Jordan, a stark difference to my previous interview. The professor said that the Bilaad al-Sham countries have different allegiances, but they are all the same people. This man saw them as a completely different culture. The rest of our discussion, on education and economics was all the same information I received in the previous interviews.

In the next interview, the language partner had many different things to say from the previous one. He said that Syrians are very similar and that it can be hard to tell the difference between them and the Jordanians a lot of the time. This may also have been because of the weakening of the Jordanian identity due to mixing with Syrians. He did not blame this on changing culture, just a desire for money. There are more jobs in Amman, so people move there to make more money. His education focused on everything in the Arab world, even though it was a diverse school. When we discussed the Syrian refugees, I felt that he harbored animosity towards them. He blamed them for the decline of Jordanian culture, of deceiving people, and

¹⁹Interviewee 6 in discussion with the author, Amman, April 27, 2015.

stealing money. The economy would be good after the refugees leave, he speculated, and the government doesn't have money because of the refugees.²⁰ This interview opened me up to the possibility that there are varying experiences among the Jordanians with refugees. Although, it seems that all of them have some sort of resentment towards one group or another.

The final language partner interview was the most tame, and was translated by another language partner. He said the Jordanians are different now than the Syrians, but after the revolution, Jordanians started caring more about the Syrians that live in Jordan because they were seen to not be trusted. When asked about the keffiyeh, he said it especially comes out in sports games, like one of my interviewees in the Badia and a piece of literature had said. In regards to the problems that the Syrians face, he said that their lives are better in the camp. Outside there is freedom, but that's not enough. They also suffer from poverty and unemployment. In the camp, they are given jobs, food, and water. He said that Jordanians would be happy if they left, Many problems would be solved if that happened: there would be no traffic, Jordanians would make money, and there would be enough food and water for everybody. He, like all of the people I interviewed does not see the Palestinians ever leaving Jordan. He said that the people of Jordan and Jericho are the same people and they are all friends.²¹ This interview provided me with all opinions that I had heard before, except that he thought the Palestinians were the same. While it was not much new information, it helped me to better frame the attitudes Jordanians have about refugees.

²⁰Interviewee 7 in discussion with the author, Amman, April 28, 2015.

²¹Interviewee 8 in discussion with the author, Amman, April 28, 2015.

Material Culture

The slogans I focused for my material culture were from the last decade. There were two important ones: الاردن اولاً (Jordan first) and كلنا الاردن (We are all Jordan). I chose to study these specifically because they are recent, so they might have been created due to the influx of refugees. According to an article, translated from Arabic, on the propaganda phrase: "الاردن اولاً," "The [slogan] is so important because it is considered a royal vision to the future. It holds an intention to create cohesion between different members of the society to participate in the process of development in all fields, political, social, and economical. It's considered a national agenda to direct all the national institutions and members of the society."²² This slogan, created in 2005 came not long after the large flow of Iraqi refugees. It is clearly supporting the equality of all the people who live inside Jordan. The article continues, "[The slogan] was established on the national priorities that considered that building Jordan from nationalism creates stability and provides support to the Arab, Islamic nation. Made in 2005.the initiative aims to make a modern, democratic country, involving all citizens so that everything functions under a national umbrella and so everyone feels like the national goal is everyone's goal."²³ This initiative sought to form a stronger national identity by including all people in the country. This provides further relevant information to answer my question, but does not prove or disprove my hypothesis. This initiative was created because of the refugees that came to Jordan. So, these refugees may have been an indirect influence on the strengthening of the Jordanian identity.

The second slogan "كلنا الاردن" (see the appendix) proved to answer less about my question, but still provided vital information about the Jordanian identity, "It started in July 2006 to

²²احمد حيدر العقرباوي, and احمد عبد الله الجريبيع. "الهوية الوطنية في المبادرات الملكية 'الأردن أولاً، كلنا الأردن'." الثرية

²³احمد حيدر العقرباوي.

strengthen the internal front. This focuses on the priority for belonging citizenship, security, political development, economic development, internal welfare, national security, to make sure the neighbors are in a safe condition, and a solution to the Palestinian conflict.”²⁴ This piece of propaganda focused much more on international issues that concerned the people of Jordan rather than on strengthening within the borders. I have seen this slogan all over the streets of Amman, especially following Jordan’s increased role in fighting Da’ash. However, I think this slogan also points to an indirect effect the refugees within Jordan have created. This is related to the refugees in Jordan in that many of the refugees are from these conflicts that now concern Jordan. If Jordan helps to solve these issues, than the refugees would leave, which according to many of the people I interviewed, would solve all of Jordan’s problems.

Conclusions

I hypothesized that the refugees who have come to Jordan mixed with the local population, and created a combined identity with Jordanians. However, the opposite happened. According to my interviews and material culture, that although there has been an attempt by the government in recent years to include all of the people living in Jordan, and the length of time they have spent here, the refugees are still segregated parts of society. As a result of them being separate, the Jordanian identity has been strengthened.

So, there has been a major effect on the Jordanian identity by the large influx of refugees. This identity, which at one time was nonexistent, now is a fully independent, separate from the surrounding countries. The government intervention in schools, advertisements, and support the refugees have received all seem to have greatly increased nationalism in the country. In my interviews, I learned that Jordanians view refugees as being not a part of Jordan, with some

²⁴احمد حيدر العقرباوي.

thinking that they are not appreciative of the life the government of Jordan has provided them. Along with this, they are extremely proud of the way their government is handling the situation, except for the older generation, who wishes more government action could be taken to solve the current problems with refugees.

The material culture I studied proved the government is taking steps to strengthen the Jordanian identity, but it is unclear if this is due to external events or because of the influx of refugees. It seems that the biggest cause of the rise in nationalism is the external events. Even if the refugees have caused such a big backlash that there has been an increase in nationalism, it was the conflicts that brought the refugees to Jordan in the first place. When the conflicts are over, it would be interesting to see what happens to the Jordanian identity when the refugees leave.

Study Limitations

The first major limitation of my study was time. There was only a month to conduct the research, and ideally, there should be enough time to get a good sample of the population from all around Jordan, which leads me to my second limitation, I did not have access to all areas of Jordan due to my position as an American student. I only had the connections that were available to me through my program to only visit certain areas in Jordan besides Amman for research. Therefore, this research did not have the scope I would have hoped for in the end. Another factor was that I only interviewed men. This was an oversight by me, but the local culture and my role as an American student affected it. There were not a lot of female professors that were in my interest area, and when I was away from Amman, women were not as available to interview as the men were. I had the chance to interview a female professor, but she was unavailable. So, the depth of my research was not as strong as it could have been.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This research can be used to further explore Jordanian identity. Because I inadvertently discovered the strengthening of nationalism from the government, that might not necessarily be related to the refugees, another paper could be conducted to search for the reasons behind the increase in propaganda and the increase in the focus of Jordan's and the royal family's history within schools. Another direction taken from my research is doing the opposite, and examining how different groups have felt over the course of Jordanian history. For example, the Syrians who came to Jordan to work in the 1950s versus the Syrians who live in Jordan now. My paper can also be used as a basis for examining Jordanians' attitudes towards the different groups of refugees. In some of my research, I found out of the varying feelings Jordanians feel towards the various groups that now live in Jordan.

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Interviewee 5 in discussion with the author, Amman, April 27, 2015.

Interviewee 6 in discussion with the author, Amman, April 27, 2015.

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احمد حيدر العقرباوي, and احمد عبد الله الجريبي. "الهوية الوطنية في المبادرات الملكية الأردنية أولاً، كلنا الأردن!". *الثروة*

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Appendices

Material Culture



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Interview Questions

1. What are the characteristics that define a Jordanian?
2. Have these characteristics been different over time?
3. How are these characteristics different than the surrounding countries?
4. What does each of the kufiyas mean to you?
5. Do the different groups of refugees live in different areas or cities than Jordanians?
6. Do Jordanians typically go to the same schools as the other groups?
7. How much does the education system focus on the history of Jordan versus the whole Arab world?
8. Are the refugees typically in a different economic class than Jordanians?
9. Do the refugees face unique problems in Jordanian society that differ from the problems that Jordanians face?
10. How would Jordan look if the refugees left?

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إقرار و تعهد

شرح عن الدراسة و هدفها

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحديد أثر هجرة اللاجئين على هوية الأردنيين،
وتصويف هذا الدراسة لتوضيح الأختلاف الحاصل على هوية الأردنيين قبل قدوم اللاجئين للأردن ومن بعد قدومهم، ومامدى وضوح هذا الأثر، وهلا الأزيمة التي أصابتنا للاجئين يجب حداتها كانت عاملاً مؤثراً.

تبيان الحقوق

من أجل الحفاظ على المعايير و الأسس الأخلاقية في هذه الدراسة، خضعت هذه الدراسة للمراجعة و التدقيق و الموافقة على محتواها من قبل هيئة محلية مشرفة على عملية البحث، في حال شعورك برغبة لإنهاء المقابلة لأي سبب كان أو لأسباب تتعلق بسلامتك الشخصية يمكنك التوقف متى شئت، الرجاء الأطلاع بعناية على التالي:

الخصوصية - جميع المعلومات التي تقدم في هذه المقابلة قد يتم تسجيلها وحماية سرية المعلومة . إذا كنت لا تريد تسجيل المعلومات، تحتاج إلى إعلام الشخص الذي يجري المقابلة

.عدم الكشف عن الهوية - كل الأسماء في هذه الدراسة سيتم إبقائها سرية و مجهولة للغير إلا إذا اختار المشاركون خلاف ذلك

السرية - سوف تبقى جميع الأسماء سرية بشكل تام ومحمية بالكامل من قبل من يجري المقابلة. من خلال التوقيع أدناه، أنا أتحمّل المسؤولية الكاملة أن التزم بهذا العقد ومحتوياته. سوف يوقع من يجري المقابلة على نسخة من هذا العقد للمشاركة

التاريخ و التوقيع

التوقيع و التاريخ

إسم المشارك

أسم المقابل

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The ISP paper by Max Yenkin does conform to the Human Subjects Review approval from the Local Review Board, the ethical standards of the local community, and the ethical and academic standards outlined in the SIT student and faculty handbooks.

Completed by: Ashraf F. Alqudah, Ph. D.

Academic Director: __Ashraf F. Alqudah, Ph. D.

Signature:



Program: JOR Spring 2015


Date: May 12, 2015

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Human Subjects Review LRB/IRB ACTION FORM

<p>Name of Student: Max Yenkin ISP Title: How Palestinians Affected Jordanian Identity Date Submitted: March 22nd, 2015 Program: SIT Jordan: Modernization and Social Change Type of review:</p> <p>Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited <input type="checkbox"/> Full <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Institution: World Learning Inc. IRB organization number: IORG0004408 IRB registration number: IRB00005219 Expires: 9 December 2017</p> <p>LRB members (print names): Dr. Ashraf F. Alqudah, Ph. D. (Chair) Dr. Ismael Abu Amoud, Ph. D. Dr. Badr Al Madi, Ph. D.</p> <p>LRB REVIEW BOARD ACTION:</p> <p>Approved as submitted</p> <p>LRB Chair Signature:</p>  <p>Date: April 1st 2015</p>
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